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The Atlantic BOOKSHELF

A Guide to Good Books

MARQUIS JAMES, born in Springfield, Missouri, forty-two years ago, took to printer's ink like a duck to water. A printer's apprentice in his early teens, he trained himself in journalism, earning his first reportorial assignments on the *Enid Events* at the age of thirteen. He graduated next to the *Kansas City Journal*. Then followed a sort of traveling fellowship, when in the course of six years Mr. James served on no less than a dozen newspapers ranging from St. Louis and New Orleans to New York. He ended his press career when he resigned from the staff of the old *New York Tribune* to become a shavetail in the A. E. F.

In 1930, Mr. James's biography of Sam Houston, *The Raven*, representing as it did five years of avocation and research, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize.

THE MAN *of the* MONTH

MARQUIS JAMES

Andrew Jackson

[Bobbs-Merrill, $3.75]

IT is of Andrew Jackson the Border Captain that Mr. James writes in this excellent biography. The volume ends with the retirement from the Governorship of Florida. He returned to the repose of the Hermitage in failing health, with a military renown that filled the world, already the 'Old Hero' to his admiring countrymen. He had come home to end his days, looking forward only to a few years of domestic peace with his devoted wife. Suggestions of candidacy for the highest political office he thrust aside with the brusque comment: 'Do they think I am such a damned fool? No, sir; I know what I am fit for. I can command a body of men in a rough way; but I am not fit to be President.'

The story of the Andrew Jackson who achieved a political revolution in the United States, who led the triumphant hosts of democracy into power, who became the founder and patron saint of a great party, Mr. James has doubtless left for a succeeding volume.

Mr. James has an eye for the colorful and an undeniable knack for depicting the picturesque and romantic features of great careers. No two figures in American history present better opportunity for the use of his exceptional talents than the two great Tennesseeans whom he has selected for his subjects — Sam Houston and Andrew Jackson. Both careers were so romantic as to be almost incredible. If Mr. James's present work is inferior to his life of Houston, it is due to no diminution of his own powers of narration, but to the fact that with Houston he had a virgin field, while with Jackson he was compelled to repeat a familiar story.

The excellent life of Jackson by Dr. Bassett has supplanted Parton's *Life* as the standard biography of the Iron Soldier of the Hermitage. Moreover, Dr. Bassett's publication of the selected Jackson *Correspondence* had done much to simplify the research necessary to a study of Jackson's career. Mr. James has drawn liberally on these sources as well as the earlier contemporary records. His work lacks the completeness of detail and the familiarity with original records of Dr. Bassett, but more than compensates for these deficiencies by its charm of style and its colorful presentation of the development of Jackson's character.

Jackson's political and soldierly careers were strangely intermingled. In his campaign for the Presidency it was charged by his enemies, notably Henry Clay, that he was running for civil office solely upon his reputation as a military chieftain. But at the time of his election as major general of the Tennessee militia it had been charged by his opponents that he had no capacity or experience as a soldier and was basing his candidacy solely upon the popularity acquired in a political career as District Attorney, Congressman, United States Senator, and Judge of the Supreme Court of Tennessee. In the army his headstrong, sometimes insubordinate, course was charged up to the fact that he was more politician than soldier, while during his occupancy of the White House his determined and sometimes dictatorial attitude was attributed to the fact that he was more soldier than statesman. Yet the same qualities which led him as a young man to contest and defeat the almost legendary popularity of General John Sevier in Tennessee gave him the confidence, enterprise, and courage to achieve his amazing victory over Wellington's picked veterans on the sodden plain of Chalmette and enabled him as President repeatedly to overcome the combined talents and prestige of the remarkable triumvirate — Webster, Clay, and Calhoun.

Jackson's most devout admirer would not contend to-day that he is to be numbered among the greatest examples of military genius. But it may well be doubted whether, considering the length of service, the lack of military education, the importance of his military situation, and the invariable success of his campaigns, any civilian soldier, save only Oliver Cromwell and Nathan

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The BOOKSHELF

Bedford Forrest, is entitled to greater renown. Jackson had had a few weeks' experience as a soldier during the Revolutionary War, so short as to be negligible except in the formation of character. Like Cromwell and Forrest, he never set a squadron in the field until middle life, but, like them, his instinct for command made him an immediate military success.

BENNETT CHAMP CLARK

WITHIN THE CIVIL WAR

Lloyd Lewis's *Sherman* (Harcourt, Brace, $3.50) belongs to the kind of biography that is also history, and to the kind of history that makes a complex analysis of the social scene as a whole rather than of one limited phase of it. As a study of personality, it is rigorously objective, and so joins the reaction against psychological guesswork that seems to be setting the pattern for this decade's biography. Mr. Lewis never speculates about the soul of Uncle Billy; he gives us no psychoanalysis, no probing of hypothetical complexes or fixations or regressions, no interior soliloquies. Sherman is presented by means of what he did, said, and wrote, and Mr. Lewis says nothing whatever about him without scrupulously informing us of the evidence on which his assertions rest. As a result, the reader feels no insecurity in trusting the author's explanation of, for example, Sherman's strange depression during the first year of the war — a phase which would have been a treasury of conjecture for the amateur Freuds. Nor, since he has the evidence before his eyes, does he feel any disposition to quarrel with Mr. Lewis's conclusions that Sherman was a practising realist, and that, so far as abstract ideas had a part in his character, he was dominated by a distrust of democracy and a passionate belief in civil order and national supremacy. That latter belief furnishes the 'Prophet' of Mr. Lewis's subtitle.

The problems which Sherman furnishes to military history are those of the Army of the Tennessee and of the march to Atlanta and the sea. Mr. Lewis emphasizes the brilliance of Sherman's grand strategy — his perception that war is a political mechanism and that not military victories but the subjection of the enemy is its object. I think that he insufficiently concedes the priority of Grant in the grand strategy of the last two years, and he occasionally yields to the contemporary tendency which he describes of writing down the importance of the Army of the Potomac and the Virginia campaign. Coming to military strategy, however, he makes clear that Grant's Vicksburg campaign created Sherman's march by teaching both generals that war need not be made by the books and that to live off the Confederacy was to reënforce the Union arms. He deals brilliantly with Sherman's rapid education in modern war — which Sherman and Grant together created and which they understood better, by April 1865, than the European generals who faced each other in 1914.

But the great merit of the book is its re-creation of the war as a national experience. Mr. Lewis achieves a truly magnificent effect — he tells the story not only of Sherman but of the armies, and not only of the armies, North and South, but of the nations as well — civilians, soldiers, bureaucrats, farmers, mechanics. He gives us humor and journalism and slang, song, caricature, folklore, rumor, panic, and mob. This generation has been busily rewriting the history of the Civil War, and of that effort Mr. Lewis's book is much the deepest and finest that has yet appeared. It is brilliant biography and even more brilliant history. The task of the Pulitzer Prize committee would seem to have been simplified.

BERNARD DEVOTO

The History of the Russian Revolution, Vols. II and III, by Leon Trotsky, tr. by Max Eastman

[Simon & Schuster, $7.00]

TROTSKY'S chronicle is finished — the world's first magnum opus on the dynamics of revolution. Trotsky's rôle as chief leader of the insurrection is now denied in Moscow. His name has been systematically expunged from the records and blotted from the map of Russia. And yet, the exile of Prinkipo disclaims bitterness in writing with 'scientific objectivity,' and in the third person, of facts which he 'neither wishes nor is able to erase from history.'

Volume II picks up the narrative from Volume I[1] (*The Overthrow of Tsarism*) at the July Rising, when the Bolsheviks played the fire hose on the impatient masses. The trouble with the counter-revolution, according to Trotsky, was that it had two would-be dictators, Kerensky and Kornilov, both of whom wished to 'save' Russia as Bonapartes. The conspiracy against the 'people' thus evolved two plans, which nullified each other, and spared the Bolsheviks in their only moment of real danger. Kerensky, 'confusing himself with the revolution,' and suffering from 'psychic neurasthenia,' was destined to flee under the cover of a little American flag — but not until after he had freed the revolting Kornilov generals, who laid the foundation for the civil war, 'necessitating the imposition of the Red Terror upon the revolution.'

The third volume begins with Trotsky's restatement of the peasant problem. He also shows how the Bolsheviks reconciled the doctrine of self-determination for nationalities (freedom to leave the Union) with the rigid centralism of the Communist Party. The most instructive chapter is on the Art of Insurrection. We learn that insurrection is never spontaneous, and can-

[1] Reviewed by Professor Hopper in the *Atlantic* for April 1932. — EDITOR

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The BOOKSHELF

not be evoked at will; but it can be organized in advance by revolutionary leaders who feel out the insurrection in good season and supplement it with a conspiracy. The key problem is to seize the right moment, to strike at the 'boiling point.'

The narrative ends with the actual seizure of power, the twenty-four hours of armed conflict, October 25–26, 1917. The real battle, however, comes in the appendices. In 'Some Legends of the Bureaucracy,' Trotsky turns the full blast of his writing power against the 'Epigones' (the second generation of Bolshevik historians) who 'drive facts into the required line of march,' who revise history, and who canonize Lenin, so that they also may be canonized, and thus establish their infallibility *ex post facto*. Stalin, of course, gets a special pillory for his reversal in writings between 1918 and 1924 (thus after the death of Lenin) regarding Trotsky's historic rôle.

Another reversal is treated under 'Socialism in a Separate Country,' the fundamental cause of schism in the Bolshevik ranks. The Comintern in 1926 set forth three ideas as hostile to Bolshevism: denial of the possibility of the Soviet Union's maintaining itself for an indefinite length of time in a capitalist environment (the problem of military intervention); of its overcoming with its own power the contradiction between city and country (problem of economic backwardness); and of creating a shut-in socialist society (problem of world division of labor). The refusal to accept these three propositions is 'Trotskyism,' labeled heresy in 1926, but, according to Trotsky's documents, the official Bolshevik policy in 1918. In asserting Lenin's internationalism, he writes, 'Only after pinning Lenin down under a mausoleum were the Epigones able to nationalize his views.'

The third appendix reads like a roll call of Bolsheviks by their writings since 1905 on the subject of Permanent Revolution. A Platonic dialogue between T and S (Trotsky and Stalin) brings the quarrel up to date.

How a revolution is prepared, how it develops, how it conquers — these are compelling subjects for all time. In the process of 'restoring his actual position in the events,' Trotsky does perform an immense service in his exposition from first-hand knowledge of the laws of revolution, generalized from historical experience. These three volumes, with an excellent index for students, seem to be addressed to a generation in Russia still younger than the 'Epigones.' Upon putting them down one wonders if they will go underground into Russia, if the official historians will reply, and what Lenin would have said about it all. It probably remains for a foreigner to write the historian's history of the revolution. Nevertheless, Trotsky's chronicle, rich in racy metaphor and historical allusion, smoking hot with the forensics of a great historic quarrel, and done into the powerful English of Max Eastman, will occupy a high and unique place in world literature.

BRUCE HOPPER

MARY ROSS, an editor of the *Survey*, has threaded together for us her impressions of four spring novels, each of which makes an interesting evaluation of Western life.

CRITICISM OF LIFE

Pageant is the quality as well as the name of **G. B. Lancaster's** spirited story of the settling of Tasmania (Century, $2.50). Pageant of pioneers who came, not like the Pilgrim fathers, each with his acres to wrest from forest and Indians, but as gentlemen with their land already their own and a thousand convict slaves to do their bidding. Pageant of a country of outlaw raids on great houses; of a country growing in self-consciousness and awkward new strengths, divided in rebellion against the yoke of empire, fighting for trade against the Yankee clipper ships and the golden lure of neighboring Australia. The book is the saga of two pioneer families, especially of Captain Comeyn, who had fought with His Majesty's forces through the Napoleonic Wars, and Madam Comeyn, born Du Nesle, married at fourteen, and determined that this new land should give due place to the sons and daughters of a great lady. The story starts with the ten months on the little schooner which the Captain and Major Sorley chartered in 1826 to carry their families and themselves to claim the fifteen hundred acres granted each of them by the Crown. It follows on through the generation of Madam's sons, gentlemen lost in the rough-and-tumble of the new land, to the early years of the twentieth century, when honors came to the Comeyns after the close of Madam's ninety-four years through the marriage of a great-granddaughter to a beer baronet. Three-dimensioned, usually vivid in both background and characterization, *Pageant* is a romance of quality, at once exciting and plausible.

Sylvia Thompson's sixth novel, ***Unfinished Symphony*** (Atlantic Monthly and Little, Brown, $2.50), shows a situation just opposite to that of *Pageant*. In the latter, ladies and gentlemen who are the flower of their day's civilization are transplanted to a wilderness; in *Unfinished Symphony* a lovely 'barbarian' is cast into what we call civilized society. When Sir Lawrence Marvell, successful sardonic playwright, cut himself loose of the web of social ambition which his wife had spun around him and their two elder children, he took his four-year-old daughter Helena with him to an island in the Mediterranean. She was not to know, even through contemporary novels, the foundation of hypocrisy, greed, and ignorance on which he believed the modern world built esteem. Helena grew up like Prospero's Miranda, surrounded by refinements of custom and the distilled wisdom of the ages in philosophy, literature, and art. The story starts as she is brought back to England at the death of her father, a clear-eyed girl who had not talked since babyhood with a woman of her own class, who knew men only through her father and the occasional chance visits of his friends.

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This situation gives Miss Thompson an opportunity for witty satire of the smug upper classes, which she uses to admirable advantage. The story, however, goes deeper than satire. Helena is an appealing picture of what youth might be without the petty limitations that the elders have laid on it for their own purposes. The girl had to undergo several severe shocks in realizing the conditions which any society places on those who would share in it, the greatest of these the discovery that her way of life could not be that which her father had taken — flight from what troubled him. Under the terms of the going world, her first love affair was one which could not end in marriage and her solution shows how a wholehearted woman may meet acknowledged disaster. It will be interesting to readers this side of the Atlantic to see that Helena found in an American woman, Mrs. Raeburn, the embodiment of really civilized personality — wisdom and strength to move in one's world without self-delusion or cringing; it was an American, Mrs. Raeburn's nephew, whom she finally married. In both matter and manner Miss Thompson has carried still further in this book the accomplishments and anticipations inherent in her earlier novels.

Evaluation of life, which is expressed concretely by Miss Lancaster and Miss Thompson in the aims and actions of their characters, finds a symbolic form in tales by **Robert Nathan** and **Bernard Shaw.** Mr. Nathan's story, ***One More Spring*** (Alfred A. Knopf, $2.00) is an idyll of the depression, the chronicle of a bankrupt dealer in antiques, a violinist, a ruined banker, and a lady of unconventional virtue who found shelter for a winter in a toolshed in Central Park and occasionally added to their scanty larder by abstracting eggs (once even a pig) from the black-and-white farm of the New York Zoo. The book brings to bear on the acknowledged miseries of the depression a quality I have not met elsewhere in print: gentle and imaginative irony, without flippancy or callousness. A smooth and distinguished piece of writing, *One More Spring* has also a perspective which gives without evasion one kind of answer to the troubles of these times.

Mr. Shaw's little book, ***The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God*** (Dodd, Mead, $1.50), comes to this country after some weeks of notable success in England. It is a reversal of the usual Shaw formula of the long explanatory preface followed by the play. First comes the brief tale of the black girl, convert of a Christian missionary in Africa, who set out through the jungle to look for God and found in turn the Gods of Noah, Job, and Jesus, and also the idols modern peoples have fashioned to explain their needs. Then follows a postscript half as long as the tale, in which the author explains that he had meant to write a play, but that the story came instead, and tells what it means to him — a 'curious and sudden inspiration . . . a message at the present world crisis.' The Shaw of this book is the Shaw we have known of old, laying about him with a rapier and a bludgeon and toppling idols from their clay feet with a dexterity that makes it hard to

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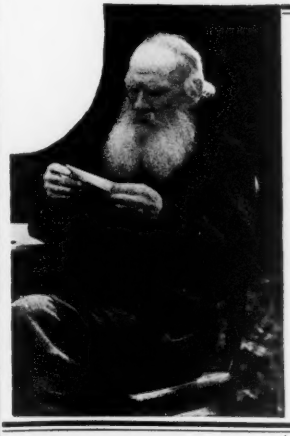

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resist quotation. But this is also a Shaw who says, 'Mere agnosticism leads nowhere.' Here is the apologia of a man who has been singularly sensitive to the spirit of his times, intolerant of stupidity and cruelty wherever he found it, but quick to honor kindness and wisdom. We see the jester who rings his bells and casts out quips to prick understanding of what to him are the issues of life and death. These seventy-five pages of text interwoven with the distinguished designs of John Farley offer a thoughtful reader an evening not often to be matched in magnanimity as in provocativeness.

MARY ROSS

Life of Joseph Chamberlain, **Vol. I, by J. L. Garvin**

[Macmillan, $5.00]

IF we Americans have the courage of our convictions, we have also the fortitude of our prejudices. In our own country we love or hate our statesmen according to the pattern of our Party, while our benevolent neutrality toward the politicians of Europe enables us to exercise in their regard every variety of predilection or antipathy which chance or hearsay may dictate. Our national sympathies, for instance, were violently Gladstonian, though if the Grand Old Man had been President instead of Premier, we should have been at least as violently divided. Toward Mr. Chamberlain we have ever been adverse. True, he was of the 'American type.' His way was organization by city, ward, and precinct. The Caucus, as he introduced it, seemed to us an American importation. But we knew by the cut of his impudently perfect coat that he was British to the backbone. The invariable orchid in his buttonhole roused our suspicion, and his monocle was an offense to the Republic.

Mr. Garvin, who has written this book for Englishmen, has done us Americans a service in thus presenting the complete Chamberlain in his habit as he lived: the republican who lived to be beloved by his sovereign next to Dizzy alone; the dissenter who learned to fight for Union; the Sunday-school teacher who came to use the Empire for his classroom; the great administrator who learned his business from the making of screws, and applied it to half the world; the supreme executive, perhaps, of his century; the man who more than any other of our time put his stamp, first on the city of his choice, and last upon the British Commonwealth of Nations. This is the Chamberlain Americans have known only in crude outline, and he is worthy of our scrutiny.

But after all, as we have said, this Life, of which only the first fifty years can be crowded into this first volume, is a book for Englishmen. I do not know when Mr. Garvin first began to write his five omniscient Sunday columns which Americans in London read in the *Observer*, but it was the day before yesterday that he was born, and much of Chamberlain's England is a personal memory with him. A detached and highly intelligent journalist, he knows every Party manœuvre, all the

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alarums and excursions of politics, as well as its pitched battles. Whigs, Tories, Liberals, and Unionists pass in embattled review and are surveyed by the umpire with a charity past praise; which shows that wound do heal, that living politicians may become dead statesmen, and that history can make of politics a noble exercise.

***Carson the Advocate*, by Edward Marjoribanks**

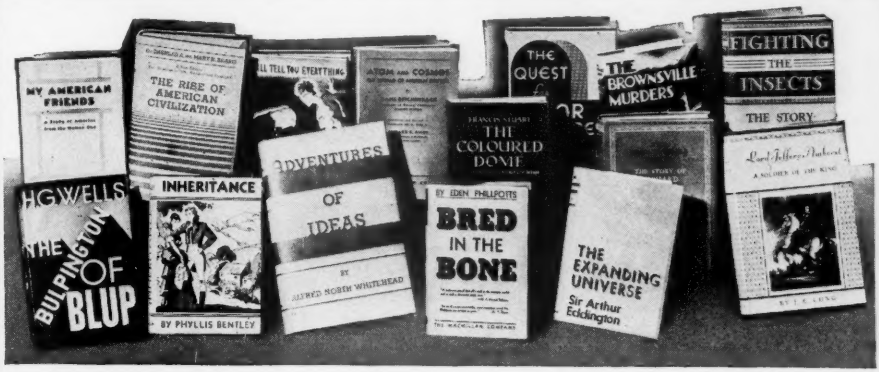
[Macmillan, $3.00]

THE last reward of the Biographer is to write a great Life — and please the widow. Edward Marjoribanks aimed higher still. He attempted to write a great Life — and please the Liver. For it was at Lord Carson's own request that this cleverest of young Tories undertook to tell the furious story of his career as advocate and politician. Marjoribanks came to it with the laurels of his biography of Marshall Hall still unwithered, and plunged into this new drama of the law courts with the same histrionic dare-deviltry. But the story comes to have a tired strain, as if some premonition of impending tragedy were already in the author's mind as he whips himself to keep the pace. The searing agony of the trial of Oscar Wilde is perhaps beyond his understanding sympathy, but he tells the horrible story with fairness, and the procession of murders, libels, and divorces which made up Carson's brilliant practice each have their stirring day in court. Lawyers are better than laymen at reading this sort of thing, but chapter after chapter is a *coup de théâtre* for any audience. Yet, as he turns over the last page of this unfinished book, it is not of the grizzled hero the reviewer thinks, but rather of his young idolater, who hoped to shape himself into just such another when the Fates, most jealous when least niggardly of gifts, overtook him in the dark, and his bright light went out.

ELLERY SEDGWICK

USING a plea of economy to mask a deliberate attempt at censorship, public libraries in certain large cities have in some instances placed only a single copy of *Ann Vickers* on their shelves, thereby effectively removing the book from the reach of most of their readers. The fact remains that Mr. Sinclair Lewis's new novel has been more eagerly sought for, more widely read, than any book of the past year. The sale has already passed 80,000 copies. . . . Magazine editors who have been trying for years to pry loose a manuscript from Lawrence of Arabia will be amused to hear the rumor that under his present pseudonym, 'T. E. Shaw,' this rare author has had manuscripts rejected by some of the very best people. . . . Willa Cather's *Shadows on the Rock* was the first book to receive the Prix Femina Américaine. . . . Next come the Pulitzer Awards.

Among publishers the spring months are regarded as the most likely season in which to put



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forth books by unestablished writers, the theory being that they will gain swifter recognition then than during the rush (?) business of the autumn. Among the life stories and 'human interest' books, I have picked out three which seemed to me especially inviting. ***True North***, by **Elliott Merrick** (Scribners, $3.00), is the unvarnished, agreeably honest diary of a young man who, being heartily sick of job and office routine, escaped to the top of the world, Labrador, where he first found himself — and then a wife. ***He Went Away for a While***, by **Max Miller** (Dutton, $2.00), is another kind of escape story, the idle fleeting moments in the life of a born reporter when he was off duty and free to exercise his curiosity and his imagination. Miller (he took charge of Heywood Broun's column last summer) writes a refreshing brand of English, unhurried, perceptive, gently ruminating. Naturally ***I Was a Spy***, by **Marthe McKenna** (McBride, $2.75), is a war story, having as its basis the secret exploits of a Belgian nurse (and an Allied spy) within the German lines. I don't think it matters whether you believe it all or not; enough of it is true to have brought an official British citation to the author, as Winston Churchill points out in his foreword. Personally, I get more excitement out of recollections of this kind than I do from twenty mystery murders.

Finally, I want to come back within our borders to a book that is the singular record of one of America's most courageous and intelligent women. ***Earth Horizon***, an autobiography by **Mary Austin** (Houghton Mifflin, $4.00), has the same kind of distinction that leads readers to Lincoln Steffens. Mrs. Austin is a forthright Independent, a woman who was raised in the Middle West and who knows it like a book. She moved to California and discovered for herself the history and pulse of the great Southwest. She became a flaming defender of the Indian. She became a writer and knew everyone here and abroad, and so grew in stature until she is to-day one of the few authorities, one of the real champions of native American culture. The genealogical account of her girlhood may be dry reading for male folk, but pick up her story anywhere after the first third and you're in for a rousing and aggressive record of American resourcefulness. As someone has said, the trouble with Mary Austin is that she was n't allowed to be at the right hand of the Throne during those first six days. If she had, it might have been a different world.

Edward Weeks

The Atlantic's List of Readable Books will be found on the page following

THE
ATLANTIC MONTHLY

VOLUME 151 NUMBER 4

APRIL 1933

CONFESSIONS OF A NOVELIST

BY EDITH WHARTON

I HAVE hesitated for some time before beginning this article, since any attempt to analyze work of one's own doing seems to imply that one regards it as likely to be of lasting interest, and I wish at the outset to repudiate any such assumption. Every artist works, like the Gobelins weavers, on the wrong side of the tapestry, and if now and then he comes around to the right side, and catches what seems a happy glow of color, or a firm sweep of design, he must instantly retreat again, if encouraged yet still uncertain; and once the work is done, and he hopes to contemplate it dispassionately, the result of his toil too often presses on his tired eyes with the nightmare weight of a cinema 'close-up.'

Nevertheless, no picture of myself would be more than a profile if it failed to give some account of the teeming visions which, ever since my small-childhood, and even at the busiest and most agitated periods of my outward life, have incessantly peopled my inner world. I have decided, therefore, to try to describe, as simply as I can, what seems to have gone to the making of my books; and there is the more reason for doing this because so few writers seem to have watched themselves while they wrote, or, if they did, to have set down their observations. Not a few painters have painted themselves at their easels, but I can think of nothing corresponding to these self-confessions in the world of letters, or at any rate of fiction, except the prefaces of Henry James. These, however, in the main are analyses of the way in which he focused a given subject and of the technical procedure employed, once he had determined his angle of vision. Even that beautiful and deeply moving fragment, the appeal to his genius, the knowledge of which we owe to Mr. Percy Lubbock's vigilance, is an invocation to the goddess and not a detached objective notation of her descent into his soul.

What I mean to try for is the observation of that strange moment when the vaguely adumbrated characters whose adventures one is preparing to record are suddenly *there*, themselves,

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in the flesh, in possession of one, and in command of one's voice and hand. It is there that the central mystery lies, and perhaps it is as impossible to fix in words as that other mystery of what happens in the brain at the precise moment when one falls over the edge of consciousness into sleep.

As for the rest of my colleagues, especially among English and American novelists, my impression is that the deeper processes of their art do not greatly interest them, or even arrest their attention; their conscious investigations of method seldom seem to go deeper than syntax, and it is immeasurably deeper that the vital interest begins. Therefore I shall try to say something of the growth and unfolding of the plants in my secret garden, from the seed to the shrub-top — for heaven forbid that I should try to magnify my vegetation into trees!

II

When I first began to talk with novelists about the art of fiction I was amazed at the frequently repeated phrase, 'I've been hunting about for months for a good subject.' Hunting about for a subject! Good heavens! I remember once, when an old friend of the pen made this rather wistful complaint, carelessly rejoining: 'Subjects? But they swarm about me like mosquitoes! I'm sick of them: they stifle me. I wish I could get rid of them!' And only years afterward, when I had learned more from both life and letters, did I understand how presumptuous such an answer must have sounded. The truth is that I have never attached much importance to subject, partly because every incident, every situation, about me is perpetually presenting itself to me in the light of story-telling material, and partly from the conviction that the possibilities of a given subject are — whatever a given imagination can make of them. But by the time I had written three or four novels I had learned to keep silence on this point.

The examination of the story-telling process may be divided into two parts: that which concerns the technique of fiction (in the widest sense), and that which tries to investigate what, for want of a simpler term, one must call by the old bardic name of inspiration. On the subject of technique I have found only two novelists explicitly and deeply interested — Henry James and Paul Bourget. I have talked long and frequently with both of them, and profitably also, I hope, though on certain points we always disagreed. I have also, to the best of my ability, analyzed this process, as I understood it, in my book, *The Writing of Fiction;* and therefore I shall deal here, not with any general theory of technique, but simply with the question of how some of my own novels happened to me, how each little volcanic island shot up from the unknown depths, or each coral atoll slowly built itself out of them. But first I will try to capture the elusive moment of the arrival of the characters.

In the birth of fiction, it is sometimes the situation, the 'case,' which first presents itself to the mind, and sometimes the characters who first appear, asking to be fitted into a situation. I have often speculated on the conditions likely to give the priority to one or the other, but I doubt if fiction can be usefully divided into novels of situation and of character, since a novel, if worth anything at all, is always both at once, in inextricable combination. I can only say that in my own case a situation sometimes occurs to me first, and in others a single figure suddenly walks into my mind. If the situation takes the lead, I leave it lying about, as it were, in a quiet place,

and just wait till the characters creep stealthily up and wriggle themselves into it. All I seem to have done is to say, at the outset: 'This thing happened — but to whom?' Then I wait, holding my breath, and one by one they appear and take possession of the case. When it befalls in the other way, I may be strolling about casually in my mind, and suddenly a character will start up before me, coming seemingly from nowhere; and again, but more breathlessly, I watch; and presently the character draws nearer, and seems to become aware of me, and to feel the shy but desperate need to unfold his or her tale. I cannot say in which way my subject will probably present itself — though perhaps in short stories the situation, in novels one of the characters, is most likely to appear first.

This, however, is not the most interesting point of the adventure. Compared with what follows it is not interesting at all, though it has, in my case, one odd feature I have not heard of elsewhere — that is, that my characters always appear with their names. Sometimes these names seem to me affected, sometimes almost ridiculous; but I am obliged to own that they are never fundamentally unsuitable. And the proof that they are not, that they really belong to the people, is the difficulty which arises when I try to substitute other names. For many years the attempt always ended fatally; any character I unchristened instantly died on my hands, as if it were some kind of sensitive crustacean, and the name it bore were its shell. Only very gradually, and in very few cases, have I gained enough mastery over them to be able to effect the change, and even now, when I do, I have to resort to *piqûres* and oxygen, and not always successfully.

These names are hardly ever what I call 'real names' — that is, the current patronymics one would find in an address book or a telephone directory; and often it is their excessive oddness which makes me try to change them. When in a book by someone else I meet people called by current names I always say to myself, 'Ah, those names were tied on afterward'; and I often find that the characters thus labeled are less living than the others. Yet there seems to be no general rule, for, in the case of certain famous novelists whose characters have out-of-the-way names, many are tied on too. Balzac had to hunt the streets of Paris for names on shop signs; and Thackeray and Trollope bent their genius to the invention of the most labored and dreary pleasantries in the pointless attempt to characterize their people in advance. Yet Captain Deuceace and the Rev. Mr. Quiverful are alive enough, and I can only suppose that the oddity of the prenamed characters is a peculiarity of my own mental make-up. But I often wonder how the novelist whose people arrive without names manages to establish relations with them!

III

A still more spectral element in my creative life is the sudden appearance of names without characters. Several times, in this way, a name to which I can attach no known association of ideas has forced itself upon me in a furtive shadowy way, not succeeding in making its bearer visible, yet hanging about obstinately for years in the background of my thoughts. The Princess Estradina was such a name. I knew nothing of its origin, and still less of the invisible character to whom it presumably belonged. Who was she, what were her nationality, her history, her claims upon my attention? She must have been there, lurking and

haunting me, for years before she suddenly walked into *The Custom of the Country*, in high-colored flesh and blood, cool, dominant, and thoroughly at home.

Another such character haunts me to-day. Her name is still odder — Laura Testvalley. How I should like to change that name! But it has been attached for some time now to a strongly outlined material form, the form of a character figuring largely in an adventure I know all about, and have long wanted to relate. Several times I have tried to give my character another name, since the one she bears, should it ever appear in print, will be even more troublesome to my readers than to me; but Miss Testvalley is strong-willed, and even obstinate, and turns sulky and unmanageable whenever I try to hint at the advantages of a change; so it is more than likely that she will one day force her way into my tale burdened with her impossible patronymic.

But this is a mere parenthesis; what I want to try to hint at is the elusive moment when these people who haunt my brain actually begin to speak within me with their own voices. The situating of my tale, and its descriptive and narrative portions, I am conscious of conducting, though often unaware of how the story first came to me, pleading to be told; but when the dialogue begins, then I become merely a recording instrument, and my hand never hesitates because my mind has not to choose, but only to set down what these stupid or intelligent, lethargic or passionate, people say to each other in a language, and with arguments, that appear to be all their own. It is for this reason that I attach such importance to dialogue, and yet regard it as an effect to be so sparingly used. For by dialogue I do not mean the pages of 'Yes' and 'No,' of platitudes and repetitions, of which most actual talk is composed, and which any writer with a photographic mind and a good memory can set down by the yard. The vital dialogue is that exchanged by characters whom their creator has really vitalized, and only the significant passages of their talk should be recorded, in high relief against the narrative, and not uselessly embedded in it.

In my case these moments of high tension, when the creature lives and its creator listens to it, have nothing to do with the 'walking away with the subject,' the 'settling it in their own way,' with which some novelists so oddly charge their characters. It is a necessity to me that the note of inevitableness should be sounded at the very opening of my tale, and that my characters should go forward to their ineluctable doom like the 'murdered man' in *The Pot of Basil*. From the first I know exactly what is going to happen to every one of them; their fate is settled beyond rescue, and I have but to watch and record. When I read that great geniuses like Dickens and Trollope 'killed off' a character, or changed the conclusion of a tale, in response to the request or the criticism of a reader, I am dumbfounded. What then was their own relation to their subject? But to show how mysterious and incalculable the whole business is, one has only to remember that Trollope 'went home and killed' Mrs. Proudie because he had overheard some fool at his club complaining that she had lived long enough; and yet that the death scene thus arbitrarily brought about is one of the greatest pages he ever wrote, and places him momentarily on a level with Balzac and Tolstoy!

But these people of mine, whose ultimate destiny I know, walk to it by ways unrevealed to me beforehand. Not only their speech, but what I

might call their subsidiary action, seems to be their very own, and I am sometimes startled at the dramatic effect of a word or gesture which would never have occurred to me if I had been pondering over an abstract 'situation,' as yet uninhabited by its 'characters.'

I do not think I can get any nearer than this to the source of my story-telling faculty; I can only say that the process, though it takes place in some secret region on the sheer edge of consciousness, is yet always illuminated by the clear light of my critical attention. What happens there is as real and as tangible as my encounters with my friends and neighbors, often more so, though it is entirely different in quality. It produces in me a great emotional excitement, quite unrelated to the joy or sorrow caused by real happenings, but as intense, and with as great an appearance of reality; and my two lives, divided between these equally real yet totally unrelated worlds, have gone on thus, side by side, equally absorbing, but wholly isolated from each other, ever since in my infancy I 'read stories' aloud to myself out of Washington Irving's *Alhambra*, which I generally held upside down.

IV

After writing *The Valley of Decision*, and my book on Italian villas, I felt that I had said my say about Italy, and the idea of attempting a novel of contemporary life in New York began to fascinate me. Still I hesitated. *The Valley of Decision* was not (in my sense of the term) a novel at all, but only a romantic chronicle, unrolling its episodes like the frescoed legends on the palace walls of its background; my idea of a novel was something very different, something far more compact and centripetal, and I doubted whether I should ever acquire enough constructive power to achieve anything beyond isolated character studies, or the stringing together of picturesque episodes. But my mind was full of my new subject, and, whatever else I was about, I went on, in Tyndall's brooding phrase, trying to 'look into it till it became luminous.'

Fate had planted me in New York, and it was always my instinct as a story-teller to use the material nearest to hand, and most familiarly my own. Novelists of my generation must have noticed, in recent years, as one of the unforeseen results of 'crowd-mentality' and the general habit of standardizing, that the modern critic requires every novelist to treat the same kind of subject, and relegates to insignificance the author who declines to conform. At present the demand is that only the man with the dinner pail shall be deemed worthy of attention, and fiction is classed according to its degree of conformity to this rule.

There could be no greater critical ineptitude than to judge a novel according to *what it ought to have been about.* The bigger the imagination, the more powerful the intellectual equipment, the more different subjects will come within the novelist's reach; and Balzac spread his net over nearly every class and situation in the French social system. As a matter of fact, there are only two essential rules: one, that the novelist should deal only with what is within his reach, literally or figuratively (in most cases the two are synonymous), and the other that the value of a subject depends almost wholly on what the author sees in it, and how deeply he is able to see into it. Almost — but not quite; for there are certain subjects too shallow to yield anything to the most searching gaze. I had always felt this, and now my problem was how to make use of

a subject — fashionable New York — which, of all others, seemed most completely to fall within the condemned category. There it was before me, in all its flatness and futility, asking to be dealt with as the theme most available to my hand, since I had been steeped in it from infancy, and should not have to get it up out of notebooks and encyclopædias — and yet!

The problem, of course, was how to extract from such a subject the typical human significance which is the story-teller's excuse for telling one story rather than another. In what aspect could a society of irresponsible pleasure seekers be said to have, on the 'old woe of the world,' any deeper bearing than the people composing such a society could guess? The answer to my musings was that a frivolous society can acquire dramatic significance only through what its frivolity destroys. Its tragic implication lies in its power of debasing people and ideals. The answer, in short, was my heroine, Lily Bart.

Once I had understood that, the tale rushed on toward its climax. I already had definite ideas as to how any given subject should be viewed, and from what angle approached; my trouble was that the story kept drawing into its web so many subordinate themes that to show their organic connection with the main issue, yet keep them from crowding to the front, was a staggering task for a beginner.

V

The novel was already promised to *Scribner's Magazine*, but no date had been fixed for its delivery, and between my critical dissatisfaction with the work, and the distractions of a busy and hospitable life, full of friends and travel, reading and gardening, I had let the months drift by without really tackling my subject. And then, suddenly, my friend Mr. Burlingame, then the editor of *Scribner's*, came to my rescue by asking me to come to his. It was found that a novel which was to have preceded mine would not be ready in time, and I was asked to replace it. The first chapters of my tale would have to appear almost at once, and it must be completed within four or five months! I have always been a slow worker, and was then a very inexperienced one, and I was to be put to the severest test to which a novelist can be subjected: my novel was to appear in print, and be exposed to public comment, before I had worked it out to its climax. What that climax was to be I had known before I began; nor have I ever understood the mental state of the novelist who starts out without knowing where or how he will end. To me the last page is always latent in the first, but the intervening windings of the way become clear only as I write; and now I was asked to gallop over them before I had even traced them out! I had expected to take at least another year or eighteen months to complete my tale, instead of which I was asked to have it ready within six months, and nothing short of 'the hand of God' must be suffered to interrupt my labors, since my first chapters would already be in print!

I hesitated for a day, and then accepted, and buckled down to my task; and I can only say that, of all the friendly turns that Mr. Burlingame ever did me, his exacting this effort was the most helpful. Not only did it give me what I most lacked, — self-confidence, — but it bent me to the discipline of the daily task, that inscrutable 'inspiration of the writing table' which Baudelaire, most wayward and nerve-racked of geniuses, proclaimed as insistently as Trollope. When the first chapters began to appear, I had written hardly fifty thousand

words; but I kept at it, and finished and delivered my novel at the date appointed.

To be turned from a drifting amateur into a professional was a great advance; but it was as nothing compared to the effect on my imagination of a systematic daily effort. I was really like the servant who went out to find an ass, and came back with a kingdom — the kingdom of mastery over my tools. I remember saying to myself, when the book was done: 'I don't yet know how to write a novel; *but I know how to find out how to.*'

From that day I went on trying systematically to exercise this faculty of 'finding out how to'; but I wrote two or three novels without feeling that I had made much progress. It was not until I wrote *Ethan Frome* that I suddenly felt in full control of my *métier*, as an artisan should be of his tools. I mention this because, when *Ethan Frome* first appeared, I was severely criticized by the reviewers for what was considered the clumsy structure of the tale. I had pondered long on this structure, had felt its peculiar difficulties, and possible awkwardness, but could think of no alternative which would serve as well in the given case; and though I am far from thinking *Ethan Frome* my best novel, and am bored and even exasperated when I am told that it is, I am still sure that its structure is not its weak point.

From that day until now I have always felt that I had my material fairly well in hand, though so often, alas, I am conscious that the strange beings who have commissioned me to tell their story are not satisfied with the portraits I have drawn of them. I think it was Sargent who said that, when a portrait was submitted to the sitter's family, the comment of the latter was always: 'There's something wrong about the mouth.'

It is the same with my sitters; though they are free to talk and even to behave in their own way, the image of them reflected in my pages is often, I fear, wavering, or at least blurred. 'There is something wrong about the mouth' — and the great masters of portraiture, Balzac, Tolstoy, Thackeray, Trollope, have neglected to tell us how they not only 'caught the likeness,' but carried it on, in all its flesh-and-blood actuality and changefulness, to the very last page.

VI

All novelists who describe (whether from without or within) what is called 'society life' are pursued by the idiotic accusation of putting 'real people' (that is, persons actually known to the author) into their books. Anyone gifted with the least creative faculty knows how utterly beside the mark such an accusation is. 'Real people' transported into a work of the imagination would instantly cease to be real; only those born of the creator's brain can give the least illusion of reality. But it is hopeless to persuade the unimaginative — who make up the bulk of novel readers — that to introduce real people into a novel would be exactly like gumming their snapshots into the vibrating human throng in a Guardi picture. If one did, they would be the only dead and unreal objects in a scene quivering with life. The low order, in fiction, of the genuine *roman à clef* (which is never written by a born novelist) naturally makes any serious writer of fiction indignant at being suspected of such methods. Nothing can be more exasperating to the creative writer than to have a clumsy finger point at one of the beings born in that mysterious other-world of invention, with the arch accusation, 'Of course we all recognize your Aunt Eliza!' or to be told (and this has more

than once happened to me), 'We all thought your heroine must be meant for Mrs. X, *because their hair is exactly the same color.*'

Of what, then, are the mysterious creatures compounded who come to life (sometimes) under the novelist's pen? Well, it would be insincere to deny that there are bits of Aunt Eliza in this one, of Mrs. X in that — though in the case of Mrs. X it is hardly likely that the psychological novelist would use the color of her hair as a mark of identity, and more than probable that the bits of Mrs. X which have actually served him are embedded in some personage where the reader alive only to outward signs would never think of seeking them. The process is, in fact, inexplicable enough to the author, and doubly so to his readers. No 'character' can be made out of nothing, still less can it be successfully pieced together out of heterogeneous scraps of the 'real,' like dismembered statues of which the fragments have been hopelessly mixed up by the restorer.

The process is more like that by which sham Tanagra statuettes used, I am told, to be manufactured for the unsuspecting collector. The experts having discovered that ancient terra cotta acquires, through long burial, a peculiar flavor, were in the habit of testing the genuineness of the piece by *tasting it;* and the forgers, discovering this, ground fragments of old Tanagras into powder, ran the powder into one of the old moulds, and fearlessly presented the result as an antique. Experience, observation, the looks and ways and words of 'real people,' all melted and fused in the white heat of the creative fires — such is the mingled stuff which the novelist pours into the firm mould of his narrative. And yet it must be owned that this does not wholly solve the problem either; in reality, it is only a step or two nearer the truth than the exasperating attributions of the simple-minded. . . .

These attributions are exasperating, no doubt; but they are less so because of the accidental annoyance that may result in a given case than because they bring home to the creator, each time with a fresh shock, the general lack of imaginative response to his effort. It is discouraging to know that the books into the making of which so much of one's soul has entered will be snatched at by readers curious only to discover which of the heroes and heroines of the 'society column' are to be found in it. But I long ago made up my mind that it is foolish and illogical to resent even such a puerile form of criticism. If one has sought the publicity of print, and sold one's wares in the open market, one has sold to the purchasers of one's books the right to think what they choose about them; and the novelist's best safeguard is to try to put out of his mind the quality of the praise or blame likely to be meted out to him by reviewers and readers, and to write only for that dispassionate and ironic critic who dwells within the breast.

THE VETERAN RACKET

BY LAWRENCE SULLIVAN

I

WHEN the Federal Government closed its books for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1932, the American people were shocked to learn that total revenues from income taxes — individual and corporate combined — did not quite cover all the costs of the Veterans' Administration services for the twelve months just ended. Incredible as it seemed, the figures were indisputable. Income-tax collections for the year, as officially reported by the Secretary of the Treasury, were $1,057,335,853, while the combined disbursements for veterans' pensions, hospitalization, disability allowances, construction, bonus loans and payments, and administrative expenses came to the neat sum of $1,064,268,966.

Of the many bewildering fiscal problems brought into sharp relief by the depression, this, perhaps, was the most alarming — and for very good reason. During the decade from 1923 to 1932, income taxes had provided, on the average, 51.41 per cent of the federal revenues. At the close of that period, a single function of government — one administrative unit out of fifty-one in the federal establishment — called for more money in a year than had been garnered from the principal source of revenue.

Here was a critical situation indeed. How did it happen that things were brought to such a pass?

Back in 1921 the full cost of veterans' services had been $662,481,718. This figure was hailed at the time as far and away the largest annual appropriation for such purposes which any government had ever made in all human history. True, there were still on the rolls of the Pension Bureau a thinning group of Civil War and Spanish-American War veterans; but their share of the annual bounty was but $260,000,000, only about one third of the total. The balance of $402,000,000 was entirely for World War benefits. In the rosy dawn of the New Economic Era, the American people felt rather proud that they were caring for their war veterans in magnificent style. All of the direct death claims for field casualties in the World War had long since been paid, and the official records of the War and Navy Departments showed that, of the survivors of the conflict, there were only 234,161 who had been wounded in action. If each of these wounded veterans had been granted an outright allowance of $1000 a year (some $400 more than the then average per capita income in the United States), the maximum annual cost would have been but $234,161,000. To be actually paying annually almost twice that sum for hospitalization, vocational training, war risk insurance, and compensation, appeared, under the circumstances, a truly American expression of noble patriotism, a fine acceptance of a high moral obligation, satisfactory to the

national conscience from every point of view.

By 1930 the combined disbursements in behalf of the veterans had increased to $835,275,349, and the next year the figure leaped across the billion mark for the first time, to $1,021,559,957. Since 1931 the annual expenditures, including authorizations for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1934, have averaged slightly more than $1,000,000,000. Nor is this all. The special economy committee of the House of Representatives reported on April 25, 1932, that veteran costs for the decade 1933–1942 would, under prevailing laws, aggregate $12,000,000,000, or an average of $1,200,000,000 annually. Actuaries of the Treasury Department have submitted informal estimates to the House Committee on Appropriations placing expenditures for the veterans during the fiscal year 1949 at $2,350,000,000.

If we may assume that existing laws will not be further 'liberalized,' — to use the word of pension lobbyists in Washington, — the grand total of all veteran outlays from November 1918 to the end of 1949 will come to the magnificent figure of $35,000,000,000. Such a regiment of ciphers defies the imagination. Let us, therefore, try to visualize it in a way that will convey to our minds just how much money that really is. Picture a house costing $10,000. Very well; the sum would provide 3,500,000 of them. Spaced on fifty-foot lots, they would line a street 33,143 miles long; or, to put it another way, that much money would build eleven solid rows of such houses between New York and San Francisco, without allowances for street intersections.

More than one sixth of this imaginary Bonus Boulevard is already completed. Since the Armistice, and including appropriations approved in the last short session of Congress for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1934, we have already provided for World War veterans an aggregate of $6,647,039,000. And in addition the several states have expended a total of $647,000,000 for bonuses, hospitalization, and rehabilitation.

It is interesting to compare America's treatment of her veterans with that of some of the other principal powers engaged in the war. Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, and Canada mobilized between them 34,244,000 men. In 1932 these countries spent a total of $891,000,000 to take care of their ex-soldiers. The United States mobilized 4,757,929 men, and the sum set aside for veterans in 1932 (after excluding all save World War benefits) was $860,635,000. Our expenditure for veterans last year was at the rate of $2668.66 for every American soldier killed and wounded in action; the comparable figure for Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, and Canada combined was only $53.60.

These figures serve to emphasize the indisputable fact that the United States has lavished upon her able-bodied 'heroes' the care which other nations have reserved for their disabled men. How this disgraceful perversion of purpose was brought about is clearly revealed by a study of the tangled web of veterans' legislation between 1920 and 1930. Pieced together from the legislative hearings, committee reports, and Congressional debates, this story stands as the most shocking record of systematic treasury raiding and organized political racketeering in modern history. The job was done chiefly by the ex-service guild, a high-powered minority group which at its maximum membership in 1927 numbered considerably less than 1 per cent of the population. What is more, this group represented a minority of the veterans themselves, for it has never included as many as

one fourth of the total Army and Navy enlistments between April 6, 1917, and November 11, 1918.

II

A three-way policy of compensation, hospitalization, and vocational rehabilitation for all wounded soldiers and sailors was enacted in a measure which came out of Congress as early as October 1917. Six months after the declaration of war against Germany, President Wilson signed the enlarged War Risk Insurance Act, which provided (1) compensation for death and disability in the line of duty, (2) family allotments and allowances for the dependents of both officers and enlisted men, (3) hospital treatment for all men injured in the line of duty, (4) vocational rehabilitation for permanently maimed veterans, and (5) term life insurance at an average cost of $9.60 a year for every $1000 of protection — a figure which placed upon the national government all the extraordinary risks of war over and above those covered in the peace-time actuarial tables, as well as all administrative costs. Private insurance companies at the time were charging $70 a year per $1000 for the full war risks.

The general tenor and scope of this basic veteran legislation may be illustrated by a single provision (Section 302, subdivision 3), never before written into law by a nation at war: —

> In addition to the compensation above provided, the injured person shall be furnished by the United States such reasonable governmental medical, surgical, and hospital services and with such supplies, *including artificial limbs, trusses, and similar appliances*, as the director may determine to be useful and reasonably necessary.

It is worthy of note that this bill, which still serves as the theoretical basis of all our elaborate veterans' administration, and which has been accepted throughout the entire world as the most equitable and comprehensive rehabilitation programme ever enacted, became operative three years before the first veterans' league was organized. While it was under legislative consideration it was criticized on the ground that it was too generous, since it provided double indemnity through both compensation and insurance; but Congress justified this on the principle that the government owed the compensation for war injuries, regardless of any other benefits which a disabled soldier might collect from insurance.

The central idea of this original programme for the veterans has been credited publicly by Mr. Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War in the Wilson Cabinet, to the late Samuel Gompers, founder and for forty-two years president of the American Federation of Labor. Mr. Gompers was serving at the time as a member of the Advisory Commission of the Council for National Defense, of which Mr. Daniel Willard was chairman. In a letter presented before a joint committee of Congress on December 20, 1932, Mr. Baker traced the development of the bill from the first presentation of the idea to its enactment into law. Of its general purposes, as set forth by Mr. Gompers, the letter said: —

> The whole question of compensation and veterans' legislation, which had proved so vexatious after the Civil and Spanish-American wars, would be solved in advance; the statute, providing a recognized scale of compensation, would be final, *and it would never be necessary after the war to consider general or private pension bills.* Upon this last feature Mr. Gompers spoke with great earnestness.

In urging the legislation before the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, Mr. Gompers had

ventured the bold prophecy: 'I am under the impression that when this measure shall have been enacted into law you will hear very little about claims for pensions.' William Gibbs McAdoo, then the Secretary of the Treasury, also urged the law as 'a final, orderly, and equitable settlement of our obligations' to those who should return from the war, and to the dependents of those killed in action. 'The plan,' Mr. McAdoo added, was 'intended to be a substitute for, and to make unnecessary, future pension laws to cover this war.' Similarly, Federal Judge Julian W. Mack, who drafted the bill for the Treasury, said in presenting it to the House committee: 'What I hope for is that this insurance will set up a tremendous moral obligation against general pension legislation.'

Confronted by the immediate task of distributing allotments and allowances to almost one million dependents, the new Bureau of War Risk Insurance in the Treasury Department, which had previously comprised only twenty employees, expanded by thousands from week to week, gradually spreading itself to eighteen widely scattered stores, warehouses, office buildings, garages, clubhouses, and even dance halls, in Washington. Despite the difficulties of dealing with a mobilized force of 2,220,000 men, which was being augmented at the rate of 300,000 a month, the eighteen scattered segments of the Bureau were soon on top of their collective job. Early in 1918 they were issuing, to quote the House Committee on Invalid Pensions, 'over four miles of checks each day.'

By the time the American troops actually entered combat in France, in the spring of 1918, checks for disability and death compensation were going forward regularly from Washington. For the first time in the history of the world, veteran care had been organized as a phase of war activity itself. Before the troops began to return from France in considerable numbers the next year, the government had already paid out $11,641,708 in death and disability compensation awards, plus some $200,000,000 in insurance settlements and administrative expenses. It had also authorized a general hospital building programme, which, through 1932, has called for $125,000,000.

In the vision of Woodrow Wilson, Newton D. Baker, William G. McAdoo, Samuel Gompers, Julian W. Mack, and Daniel Willard, the problem of caring for the veterans had been settled once for all. The financial burden would build up gradually to a peak load in the years from 1928 to 1935, and would then fall off with the curve of normal mortality. Justice would be served to every veteran according to his wounds; bereft dependents would be aided approximately according to their needs; the national treasury would be spared the shameless drain of pension scandals. Such was the alluring picture framed by the advanced science of mathematics and the high art of statesmanship in those throbbing, thrilling days of the war, when it still was an honor to serve one's country unselfishly.

III

Before the Bureau of War Risk Insurance had been geared up to five miles of checks a day, a flood of liberalizing amendments to the original all-embracing compensation law poured in upon both Houses of Congress. So insistent became the demand for the inclusion of new classes of beneficiaries that an omnibus amendatory bill was soon passed, and it was signed by President Wilson on June 25, 1918. It provided a generally broader base of compensation, and abolished many of

the legal formalities set up in the original law to limit awards strictly to those suffering disabilities directly connected with the military service.

Illustrative of the tendency to bring ever larger groups under the beneficent wing of the federal treasury — which has been the primary objective of every subsequent revision of the veterans' laws — was Section 301 of the 1918 amendment. It redefined the word 'wife,' as it appeared in the original text, to include the husbands of all women who had served in the Army and Navy nursing corps. By this single revision a potential group of some 8000 men were made beneficiaries of the law, wholly without regard to their own military service. Another subtle revision at this time defined the term 'widow,' in the 1917 act, to include 'widower.'

In February 1919, a direct cash allowance of $60 was provided for every person discharged from the military service, and in December of the same year the second general 'liberalization' of the 1917 law was enacted. One of the most burdensome indirections of this second revision was Section 300, which made retroactive to April 6, 1917, the legal fiction that everyone accepted in the military service during the World War was in sound physical and mental condition. Any incapacity whatever suffered during the term of service thereby became a disability 'incurred in the line of duty.'

A further amendment to this section, in March 1925, provided specifically that in cases of paralysis, paresis, blindness, and similar afflictions, no application could be denied because of the veteran's 'own willful misconduct' either before or after his discharge.

IV

By 1920 the first of the professional veterans' organizations had been launched. From that date forward, the annual programmes of the several organizations charted the course of veteran legislation on Capitol Hill. The new spirit of the drive for service emoluments, born at this period, was indicated by an incident in the St. Louis caucus which organized the American Legion. When a long list of suggestions to Congress was under consideration, one Colonel Herbert, a delegate from Massachusetts, leaped to his feet and shouted to the chair: 'I move you, sir, that the convention substitute the word "demand" instead of "request" where it says, "We request Congress . . ."'

The first demand was for a pooling of all veteran functions under a new Veterans' Bureau. This was provided in a bill signed by President Harding on August 9, 1921.

On March 4, 1923, the 1917 law was again amended; this was its third 'liberalization.' The general legislative method employed in all these revisions was exhibited once more, in connection with the sections dealing with post-war tuberculosis. The original act provided conclusive presumption of service connection in all cases of 'pulmonary tuberculosis' developed within two years after discharge. Reopening the section on the ground that many gas victims might become patients after two years, the veterans' lobby extended the presumptive period to three years.

But while thus revising the text they also struck out the word 'pulmonary,' thereby bringing in some 12,000 cases of other forms of tuberculosis developed since the war. Under the presumptive clause, of course, each of these new cases was automatically established as contracted 'in the line of duty.'

Another provision in the original law denied all benefits to persons dishonor-

ably discharged. The 1923 revision provided that those guilty of treason, mutiny, spying, or any offense involving willful and persistent misconduct, should *not* be deprived of statutory benefits save in those cases where the discharge followed a formal court-martial. Under the administrative routine of the Army and Navy, which assembles courts-martial only for the gravest offenses involving high ranking officers, this little amendment restored to eligibility about 90 per cent of those originally disqualified by dishonorable discharges.

Meanwhile, the cash bonus bill had been presented late in 1920, precipitating a four-year legislative battle which involved stinging vetoes from Presidents Harding and Coolidge before the Adjusted Compensation Act became operative, over the presidential veto, on May 19, 1924. The two-thirds majority in both houses necessary to override the veto was obtained four days after the reading of Mr. Coolidge's message of May 15, which said in part: —

> America entered the World War with a higher purpose than to secure material gain. Not greed, but duty, was the impelling motive. Our veterans as a whole responded to that motive. They are not asking as a whole, they do not want as a whole, any money recompense. Those who do seek a money recompense, for the most part, of course, prefer an immediate cash payment. We must either abandon our theory of patriotism or abandon this bill. Patriotism which is bought and paid for is not patriotism. Our country has maintained the principle that our government is established for something higher and finer than to permit those who are charged with the responsibility of office, or any class whose favor they might seek, to get what they can out of it. Service to our country in time of war means sacrifice. It is for that reason alone that we honor and revere it. To attempt to make a money payment out of the earnings of the people to those who are physically well and financially able is to abandon one of our most cherished American ideals. The property of the people belongs to the people. To take it from them by taxation cannot be justified except by urgent public necessity. Unless this principle be recognized our country is no longer secure, our people no longer free. This bill would condemn those who are weak to turn over part of their earnings to those who are strong. Our country cannot afford it. The veterans as a whole do not want it. All our American principles are opposed to it. There is no moral justification for it.

As in the instance of the original compensation law of 1917, the adjusted service certificates, to mature in 1945, were granted by both the House and the Senate with stern admonitions that this was a *final* settlement of all veteran claims. In the words of President Hoover, in his veto of the cash loan bill on February 26, 1931, 'When the bonus act was passed, it was upon the explicit understanding of the Congress that the matter was closed, and the government would not be called upon to make subsequent enlargements.'

Thus, by 1924, the World War veterans had been given two 'final' settlements in lieu of pensions.

V

By the end of 1923, the omnibus amendments of five years had reduced the veteran laws to a ridiculous maze of conflicts and cross-purposes. The clearly defined compensation policy of the 1917 act had been vitiated so gradually that even members of Congress could not say who was eligible for government benefits. So confused did the situation become on Capitol Hill that a special branch of the Veterans' Bureau was established in the House Office Building, in charge of an expert in veteran law who had been approved by the veterans' organizations. His

principal job was to answer for members of Congress the bewildered queries of their constituents.

Meanwhile the ex-service lobby had been boring in assiduously on the House side of the Capitol, and had secured the creation of a special committee to handle all legislation relating to World War veterans. The first chairman of this committee was one of the founders of the American Legion, and the majority membership was selected as if by appointment of the veterans' organizations. In the Senate, the bills were still being handled in the Finance Committee, but by a sort of gentlemen's agreement a subcommittee on veteran affairs had been set up. This too was headed by a member of the American Legion. With the establishment of this happy legislative arrangement, the way was paved for the presentation of some real, red-blooded, he-man demands upon the Congress.

First, the bonus bill was whipped through both houses over President Coolidge's veto. Next, the whole body of veteran law was codified in the World War Veterans' Act of June 7, 1924. In the process, scores of new 'liberalizing' amendments were added, one of which extended to January 1, 1925, the presumptive period of service origin in all cases of tuberculosis, neuropsychiatric disease, paralysis agitans, and certain other afflictions. Another provision of this act recognized the agents of the three principal veterans' organizations as claim prosecutors before the Bureau, in which capacity they were entitled to inspect all the military service records of the government, as the potential basis for new claims.

As it turned out, this provision came nearer to precipitating a national scandal of the first magnitude than any other section of the codified law. Reviewing six years' operations under the 1924 policy, members of the Committee on Invalid Pensions of the House of Representatives reported in 1931:—

> The case records of the United States Veterans' Bureau, and especially the medical examination reports, social workers' reports, etc., are essentially confidential in nature; they are of the kind which a court would hold to be privileged communications. There is, therefore, questionable propriety in the authority granted in section 30 of the World War Veterans' Act of 1924, as amended July 3, 1930, whereby representatives of the veterans' organizations are permitted the inspection of these records. 'Inspection,' as often administratively applied, is extended to temporary physical possession. This, apart from the withdrawal of protection for peculiarly confidential data, is a privilege that invites fraudulent practices; e.g., the extraction of vitally important exhibits, or the substitution of other papers. Moreover, it tempts to the fabrication of fraudulent affidavits incorporating data disclosed by the case records. Finally, if the claimant be contemplating the filing of a suit for insurance, he will have been put in full possession of the facts upon which the government's defense of the suit would rest.

Interesting, too, is the history of this indictment of the veteran racket. The paragraph quoted is an extract from a report of 150 pages completed by the Committee on Invalid Pensions in the winter of 1931. Although the document was ordered set in type by the Government Printing Office, only forty copies ever came from the presses. These have been closely held by committee members, apparently in response to extraordinary pressure from some quarter. To this day the report has never been catalogued as a public document in the index of the Library of Congress.

Their vast power and influence, both upon legislation and upon the routine of veteran administration, is not denied by the service organizations. The

1927 report of the National Legislative Committee of the American Legion contains this thumb-nail outline of history:

> The Legion alone was responsible for the enactment into law of many of these measures, having *drawn the legislation*, obtained its introduction, aided in its progress in committees by testimony and legislative effort, and finally prevailed upon the House and Senate to take favorable action in time for approval by the President.

In the same vein, National Commander Henry L. Stevens was proud to tell the American Legion Convention at Portland, Oregon, in September 1932: —

> During the past session of Congress every appropriation bill was reduced to the limit with the exception of the Veterans' Administration appropriation of $928,387,795, and this was saved only through the tremendous influence exercised by the Legion.

Mr. Stevens spoke at that time for an organization whose total affiliated strength was several thousand short of 1,000,000. As has already been said, the combined service roster of the American forces in the World War was 4,757,929.

VI

The two great legislative achievements of 1924 — the bonus and the codification — demonstrated the central political facts which have influenced all service legislation since that year. These measures were evidence, first, that the veterans' lobby was securely in the saddle on Capitol Hill; and, second, that the several organizations had, in fact, become part and parcel of the vast administrative machinery set up to dispense the nation's now apparently boundless gratitude. From 1924 to 1932, therefore, the process of 'liberalizing' the veteran code was considerably less faltering.

The fight for the bonus had also demonstrated the efficacy of the Legion's system of stimulating telegrams from home, under which a hesitant member of the House or Senate might have as many as 1500 telegrams and letters dumped upon his desk in the course of twenty-four hours. Under the secret instructions in the hands of all post commanders — and there are some 10,600 of them throughout the country — a brief wire from the Washington office stating that Representative Blank was 'off the reservation' concerning a given piece of legislation would call forth instantly a veritable deluge of protests, not only from bona fide members of the various posts in the Congressional district, but from friends and relatives as well. By thus reflecting a popular demand which was out of all proportion to their real voting influence in the district, the veteran groups were able in several notable instances literally to scare elected officers of the government out of their wits in as little as three hours.

'If you don't support this bill, your successor will,' became the stock greeting of one of the most notorious veterans' lobbyists when he called on a Congressman after having passed the word back home to 'give him the works.' While this situation prevailed on Capitol Hill, no one dared challenge publicly any demand of the organized veterans. Some there were, to be sure, who suspected that it was all a racket. But to oppose the veterans was like sticking one's head out a train window: it might be that nothing would happen, or, again, one's political head might be knocked completely off. Under the circumstances nobody would risk it.

Hence, there was another general revision of the administrative code in 1925, another in 1926, another in 1928, and yet another in 1930. Each brought large new classes under the provisions of the hand-out system. Each 'liberal-

ized' the requirements regarding evidence of service connection in disability claims. Each placed the administrative routine ever more completely in the hands of the professional veterans' organizations. And each added new categories of beneficiaries to the government rolls.

Indeed, things were moving along so smoothly that the Spanish War Veterans, who had been granted their own 'final' settlement as early as 1920, came back to life in Washington and pressed vigorously for enlargement of their bounties. Their last general pension bill was adopted on June 2, 1930. The degree of this 'liberalization' is indicated by the fact that in 1920 there were only 30,432 Spanish War pensioners on the federal rolls, at a cost of $4,624,094, while the number in 1932 was 235,306, provided for in the budget to the tune of $119,396,447.

In 1930 the last pretense of limiting pensions to line-of-duty disability was abandoned. In that year a blanket provision was written into the law authorizing any veteran to claim benefits for sickness or injuries suffered *after* his term of military service. This eligibility extended to hospitalization as well as to monthly maintenance checks. So inclusive were its terms that a veteran who, in 1926, fell off a ladder in his own basement actually received free hospitalization plus a 'disability allowance' for his broken leg. This general class of disability allowances, for injuries not even presumably connected with the military service, cost no less than $105,147,800 during the first two years. And this sum was in addition, of course, to the $189,540,380 paid out in 1932 for compensation in cases in which the disability, either presumably or in fact, arose from war service. It was in addition also to hospitalization costs of $60,000,000 for the fiscal year 1932.

Testifying before the joint committee of the House and Senate which was set up to investigate abuses of the veteran laws, spokesmen for the National Economy League, in December 1932, tabulated annual expenditures of $457,000,000 which might be stricken from the 1934 veterans' budget without depriving any individual of either compensation or care originally awarded for military disabilities.

Similarly, in his last annual report, the Director of the Veterans' Administration, Brigadier General Frank T. Hines, informed Congress that the veterans' hospital load as of June 30, 1932, was 39,393, of which number 15,460 patients were being treated for service-connected disabilities, real or presumptive, while 23,472 were hospitalized for post-war sickness or injuries. In two special reports during the last five years the American Medical Association has vigorously denounced the hospitalization of non-service cases as an indefensible drain upon the national treasury. But, as one of the Capital's most flamboyant veteran fixers once observed in an informal moment, 'Who is the American Medical Association?'

VII

The march moves merrily forward. Everybody who had ever worn a federal uniform being now eligible for some sort of remittance or care, the veterans turned back once more, in 1930, to the bonus. The success of the 50 per cent loan drive during the trough of the depression, in 1931, still is remembered as one of the high points of the Seventy-second Congress. Under this act, which was passed over President Hoover's ringing veto, the Veterans' Administration had loaned, up to October 31, 1932, a total of $1,418,679,351. The 1931 act, incidentally,

threw over completely the actuarial basis on which the whole system of adjusted service certificates had been set up in 1924.

By fixing the interest rate on the loans at 4½ per cent, Congress undertook to restore the plan in time to an actuarial basis. At this rate the compound interest on the 50 per cent loans would practically wipe out the certificate value by the date of maturity in 1945. But under a law of July 21, 1932, the interest rate was reduced to 3½ per cent. In December 1932, at the opening of the last lame-duck session, a bill was presented in the House to abolish the interest charge entirely.

Meanwhile strong foundations have been laid in Congress for a general pension system. Measures were presented by the American Legion, in December 1931, looking to a general pension law applicable to widows and orphans of all World War veterans, regardless of the cause of the principal's death. This demand was smothered at the time by the fight for immediate prepayment of the remaining maturity value of the 1945 bonus certificates, and little progress was recorded on the pension programme. But the bill is still before the committee. According to its sponsors, it will cost $150,000,000 for the first five years' operation.

After widows' and orphans' pensions are firmly established, the next step will be to secure direct pensions for all living veterans. That step is already well advanced through the preparatory stages in the high councils of the veterans' organizations. And now another member of the American Legion, this time a Democrat, is chairman of the House Committee on World War Veterans' Legislation.

Meanwhile the Washington contact men who act for the veterans have not been discouraged by the stand which President Roosevelt took during the 1932 campaign on the bonus issue. Pressed for a statement of his views on immediate payment, Mr. Roosevelt repeated, in his Pittsburgh address of October 19, the policy outlined in an earlier newspaper interview. He said on both occasions: 'I do not see how, as a matter of practical business sense, a government running behind two billion dollars annually can consider the anticipation of bonus payment until it has a balanced budget, not only on paper, but with a surplus of cash in the Treasury.'

Presidential vetoes are obstacles, to be sure, but the veterans' organizations have demonstrated more than once that they are not insuperable. Thus, those who guide the destinies of the aggressive million still tingle to the great vision held out to them in 1924 by National Commander Hanford MacNider. After saying that the American Legion was, by the terms of its own constitution, 'absolutely non-political,' Mr. MacNider roused his audience to feverish enthusiasm with these beckoning words: 'The G.A.R. dominated the United States for years after the Civil War, although it had a membership of but 20,000.' He developed the thought in some detail and then drove it home with the challenge, 'What an opportunity for the Legion!'

TRUTH IN ADVERTISING

BY DON KNOWLTON

> . . . Thou shalt fear
> Waking, and sleeping mourn upon thy bed;
> And say at night, 'Would God the day were here!'
> And say at dawn, 'Would God the day were dead!'
> With weary days thou shalt be clothed and fed,
> And wear remorse of heart for thine attire,
> Pain for thy girdle, and sorrow upon thine head:
> This is the end of every man's desire.
>
> SWINBURNE

SOME years ago an ingenious practical joker proposed to the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World the slogan, 'Truth in Advertising.' It was a delectable phrase to mouth, a thumbs-in-the-vest sort of phrase. It elevated peddler into preacher overnight. It enabled the veriest Munchausen in the profession to turn disciple of the gospel of truth, simply by wearing a button.

Small wonder, then, that advertising men — like a crowd of hypnotists solemnly putting themselves to sleep by their own passes — have not only adopted the slogan, but, by a natural process of rationalization, have come to believe that it is actually true. I know of no better demonstration of the manner in which the printed word, oft repeated, may create and perpetuate an illusion in the minds of men. To this day most advertising men, victims of their own technique, swear that they speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth — dashing off preposterous imperatives and monstrous superlatives with the air of Moses bringing down tablets from the Mount.

Now all might have been well with this Sacred Order of Exaggeration if the pressure of competition, in these days of depression, had not raised a stench that fairly blasted the odor of sanctity from the advertising temple. Brother Bill spun a yarn a mite too big for comfort, and somebody called him a liar. Liar yourself, you big so-and-so, said Brother Bill, and the fight was on. Compared to the circus that ensued, the old affair of the pot and the kettle was nothing but a side show.

To-day, therefore, the very premise which gave rise to the slogan, 'Truth in Advertising,' is on the pan. How much advertising is really 'true'? Does advertising, on the whole, present statements founded upon actual facts?

I

Yes, I would say — being an advertising man myself — most advertising is based upon actual facts. But very little of it is really true. Who in the world wants truth in advertising?

I have never seen truth in advertising attempted, but it could be done. A really conscientious manufacturer of mouth wash, for instance, might advertise as follows: —

YOU MAY CURE
YOUR HALITOSIS

But it won't do you a bit of good.

Gargle all you please with our patented wash — the fact still remains that your face is one that God forgot, and if you think romance will ever come your way, you're very much mistaken.

Besides, our product is nothing but water and flavoring matter — both pure, but what of it?

Correspondence courses present an especially fruitful field for truth in advertising. Admire the candor of a 'college' which advertises: —

YOU'LL NEVER AMOUNT TO MUCH

Success comes only to one man in a thousand.

Millions study and slave, but they never get anywhere.

Of course, if you want to try our course, that's your business — we'd rather have your few dollars than see them go to a bootlegger.

Or perhaps you would praise a department store which observes truth in advertising?

PARISIAN STYLES
IMPORTED FROM JERSEY

They're really rather fine dresses, worth every dollar you pay for them —

But, my dear girl, we can't make you over. No garment can turn a clothes rack into a Garbo. Look at yourself in the mirror! What can you expect?

Oh, if you insist, we'll be glad to fit you, as well as you can be fitted.

You who demand the truth — have you not left, within your souls, one single shred of compassion? Can you not spare a few drops of the milk of human kindness, to be spread at large among mankind?

Advertisers do not deal with you. They deal with people in the mass. Would you reveal the truth to all humanity? God shelter people from the truth! May facts be concealed from them forever!

Dare you face reality? Have you ever known one man or woman in the world who had the courage impersonally to evaluate stark existence? Is not your own life one long epic of industriously fostered illusions?

II

Would you have 'Truth in Democracy'?

Sharpen your pencil, censor, and we will start at the beginning. That line, 'All men are created equal' — cross that out. That's almost as bad as 'Not a cough in a carload.'

Ah, here's a phrase which certainly must be deleted: 'Government of the people, by the people, for the people.' Some of these copy writers are brilliant fellows, you know, but they simply will not stick to facts.

What! Did we actually use the slogan, 'Keep the world safe for democracy'? And we were n't prosecuted by the Better Business Bureau?

Would you have 'Truth in Religion'?

Let us revise the hymnal. It will not be so difficult. A sample page, for instance, might appear thus: —

Shall we gather at the river,
Where bright angel feet have trod;
With its crystal tide forever
Flowing from the throne of God?

Yes, we'll gather at the river,
The beautiful, the beautiful river;
Gather with the saints at the river
That flows from the throne of God.[1]

[1] The statements contained in this hymn, while not guaranteed to be true, are based upon information which we believe to be reliable.

Would you have 'Truth in Behavior'?

Rule out 'I'm pleased to meet you' at once. Sincerity is the keynote! Exclaim, 'I loathe the sight of you and I hope you choke.'

Never say, 'Oh, must you go so soon? It's still early.' Just shout, 'Hooray,' and kick your guests out jovially, with the aid of a lead pipe.

When your hostess asks her daughter to play the piano for you, simply walk out of the house and never come back. At bridge, strangle your partner.

Copy-edit from your vocabulary the phrase, 'We've had a marvelous time.' Tell your host the truth, and slap his face by way of emphasis.

Would you have 'Truth in Education'?

Very well — let us turn a few favorite pictures toward the wall.

Dear dashing Teddy — he of the teeth — ornamented with six-shooter and ten-gallon hat, flicking a frolicsome lariat as he spurs his bucking broncho up San Juan hill at the head of the whole American army.

The *Mayflower* sailing from England to the United States.

Forerunner of futuristic art, awesome in design, done in tints horrible and fantastic, that for years graced the wall of all well-ordered schoolrooms — portrait of the human stomach, showing the effects of alcohol.

Lindbergh, first flier ever to cross the Atlantic.

Father Longfellow, seated on the stairs with grandfather's clock behind him and open-mouthed grandchildren at his feet, reciting the stanza that has made him the greatest of all American poets: —

'Between the dark and the daylight,
When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations,
That is known as the Children's Hour.'

III

Seriously, truth is actually becoming a menace in these matters. Fact-finding literalists are slowly crucifying education. The cancer of reality gnaws at the gall bladder of religion. Among the younger generation, behavior is degenerating into sincerity. And how long can democracy hold out against 'Of Thee I Sing'?

Worse than that — Pan has turned fourth-dimensional. Venus is but the creature of a Freudian complex. Heaven and hell are states of mind. Keats is an agglomeration of vowels and consonants, and Beethoven a carefully calculated succession of vibrations.

But yet have hope, ye of little faith! Thank mass production and whatever other gods may be that there is still alive in the world one lone champion of the glorious banner of illusion.

Minnie Schultz sits on her attic cot, surveying her bulging calves. For her face she knows there is no hope, but love does not stop at the chin. If only that excess ninety pounds . . .

Ah! It says in the paper, 'Take Madam Maloney's curious concoction for three weeks, and flesh will fall from you like leaves in October, revealing the lithe limbs in all their pristine elegance. Only 50 cents a bottle . . .'

Fifty cents for romance! Fifty cents for love! Fifty cents to tread the path of Guinevere, to emulate the exploits of Cleopatra. Who but Jonathan Edwards incarnate would begrudge the spending of that fifty cents, or challenge the advertising which provoked it?

Hiram Dobbs, shipping clerk with leanings toward the ukulele, swings his chattering chariot toward an aurora borealis through which blazes in neon the words, 'Super power.' 'Two gallons of gas,' says Hiram.

Why does he choose the service station with the slogan 'Super power'?

God help him, he knows not. Heredity may unveil a moron mother, and a father whose face is a testimonial to a misspent life. Physiology may disclose twenty years of malnutrition. Psychiatry may reveal a mighty inferiority complex. Hiram's I. Q.'s may sag as low as his shoulders. But in his blood there flow, nevertheless, the desire of Caligula, the ambition of Alexander, the self-esteem of Narcissus.

Super power! I shall fly, I shall soar, I shall conquer! Nay to me she dare not say! Rapture shall be mine, — if the missus will let her off, — when to the magic corridors of Coney Island I lure the lovely Amelia Pratt!

Consider Abner Snodgrass. He is not a happy man. Women observe him never. He knows not whether it is presence of B. O. or absence of S. A. — but the fact remains that his virtue is desperately in need of being assailed.

Then comes the cheering message: —

> They laughed at me when I sat down
> at the piano . . .
> But within an instant the room was
> filled with awe.
> They could not believe I had learned
> to play in ten lessons — all by mail —

Thirteen dollars and seventy-nine cents, and Mamie will make eyes at me! Ten short weeks, and Lucy will be jealous, and long to stroke my hair!

You truth-mongers — would you forbid this Caliban to become an Orpheus? Would you chide the ingenius satirist who collects $13.79, that this clod may catch for an instant the illusion of self-esteem?

Then there is the matter of linoleum.

Marriage is a poor thing, at best. I know of no other institution with respect to which, in the course of the last four thousand years, there has been so little improvement.

Small wonder, then, that little Luella Witherspoon (née Doolittle) is becoming discouraged. Not that Witherspoon drinks, fights, philanders, or sings while shaving; to the contrary, he appears to be shriveling into desuetude, like a grape hanging too long upon the vine.

Some secret malign influence is at work within that house!

At last Luella spies an advertisement that reveals the extraordinary effect of environment upon the subconscious. If you would have love, you must have beauty in all things — even in kitchen floors. Linoleum —

Ah! The cracks in the kitchen floor! Lay new linoleum — and the glorious years stretch ahead, one long magnificent epic of thrice-concentrated conjugal devotion.

Would you maltreat the merchandiser who thus contrives, by re-covering a kitchen, to perpetuate a paradise?

IV

I crave an indulgence for the poor devils who write the stuff believed by Luella Witherspoon, Abner Snodgrass, Hiram Dobbs, and Minnie Schultz.

Jason had his golden fleece, Galahad his grail — but these pitiful sloganeers have nothing save a doubtful income, a muddled sense of shame, a heartful of shattered ideals, and a profound faith in the futility of existence. To them, mathematics itself is a hoax, logic a racket, faith a side show, and truth the supreme harlequinade. To them,

> To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
> To the last syllable of recorded time.

Painfully they grind out their alliterative grist, little knowing that the only true things that exist, in the lives of thousands, are the very illusions which this grist creates. And thus may they continue — for if they should speak the truth, then, indeed, 'This is the end of every man's desire.'

OUR POLITICAL MONSTROSITIES

BY FRANK R. KENT

I

THE extraordinary degree to which the country has become conscious of Huey P. Long since his entrance into the United States Senate, not so many months back, makes his case a particularly interesting one. A year or so ago this tough young fellow, with his loud mouth and boorish ways, was just a local Louisiana politician who had achieved national notoriety through his clownish performances as Governor — such as receiving distinguished foreign visitors in his pajamas — and through the effort to impeach him upon a variety of charges, some of them of a criminal nature. To-day he is a national figure and a party factor, holding his state in the hollow of his hand, a recognized force in the nomination of a President of the United States, the only Senator with three votes instead of one, not a man to be lightly dismissed or shoved aside. In the past six months there have been a dozen or more magazine articles printed about him. They have described his motley career, pictured his curious character, spread before the people the innumerable coarse stories and colorful incidents in which he shines as the blatant hero.

During the recent lame-duck session of Congress, when he conducted a filibuster that degraded the Senate and brought down upon it an unusual denunciatory deluge, the newspapers gave him literally hundreds of columns of space. His name and face appeared with astonishing regularity upon the front pages. He practically blotted out the leading publicity seekers in the Senate, thereby making of himself a source of deep discouragement to the other demagogues. In a single session he became the most talked-about and written-about Senator, extremely disgusting, of course, to persons of taste and intelligence, but, since these constitute an exceedingly small percentage of the whole, inoffensive to the bulk of the people — and interesting.

It is not the purpose of this article to dwell upon the now familiar record and personality of the man, nor to recount his amazing performances, public and private, since coming to Washington. Rather, I should like to discuss what appear to be three fundamental questions raised by the situation. First, how do essentially cheap and shoddy fellows achieve real political power and obtain high political office in a great state? Second, what is the formula by which they translate their state power into national notoriety? Third, what, if anything, can be done to stop them?

II

As to the means by which men like Long get into public office, it seems to me simple enough. In a nation where the suffrage is universal and unrestricted, a great many things happen in elections that defy logic and reason.

Most surprising results are accidentally obtained in the curious popular tides that periodically run in America. Some of the men swept into Congress and state offices by the Democratic wave of last November constitute shocking examples of the utter inability of emotionally excited voters to discriminate or distinguish. But the Longs — for, despite his overplayed individualism, Huey is a type and not unique — the Longs are not accidents, and do not ride in on the tides.

How, then, do they get in? The soundest explanation lies in the moronic underworld theory of that wise old Kansan philosopher, William Allen White. Last year, during the campaign, Mr. White, in describing the character and calibre of the thousands of voters who followed, and so nearly elected Governor, 'Doctor' John Brinkley, the goat-gland man, whose radio was taken away from him and whose license to practise medicine was revoked, wrote: 'In every civilization there is a moronic underworld which cannot be civilized. It can be taught to read and write, but not to think, and it lives upon the level of its emotions and prejudices.' The Brinkley voters did not know what the word 'moronic' meant, but they did know that 'underworld' meant something wicked. Indignant, hundreds of them wrote in to Mr. White, denouncing him for slander, insisting that they were Christians of good character and high standing in the church. Mr. White replied that he had not meant they were bad, but just dumb.

To those who, like myself, believe that the great bulk of the voters belong to this moronic underworld, the success of the Huey Longs needs no other explanation. By nature endowed with the gifts that appeal to the emotional and prejudiced masses, these men need only the right opportunity and a certain political shrewdness. Sometimes they miss the mark, as Huey once did, but he hit it squarely the second time. The eminent goat-gland specialist, who promised to build a lake in every county to improve the climate, failed by a narrow margin in Kansas, and the Reverend Bob Shuler — who I am told charmingly combines the more striking qualities of Aimee Semple McPherson, Cole Blease, and Tom Heflin — by a wider one in California. But Huey, whose simple and appealing programme is to take their money away from the rich and give it to the poor — Huey won.

It was on some such note as this that he was elected Governor. It is on some such note as this that such men are always elected. When the gullible nature of the electorate is considered, the surprising thing is, not that the Longs get into public office this way, but that so few of them do. It really is not much of a trick. The real trick is to stick in after they have got in. Most of them do not. A lot of them simply flash in the pan, flop back into the discard after a brief space. One can look back and recall quite a number who strutted for a time on the political stage, but lacked the power to hold on. Magnus Johnson, the bellowing bull from Minnesota, is an excellent example, and there are plenty of others.

It is not enough, in this business of the cheap charlatan slipping into high office, merely to have mass appeal in the sense that a woman has sex appeal. If that is all he has, the inevitable reaction sweeps him out as easily as he was swept in. He does not 'make good.' His alluring promises are unredeemed. The show he puts on as an executive or legislator is not nearly so entertaining as the one he gave as a candidate. The disillusionment is complete, and the moronic underworld of voters, with inherent fickleness, turns to a new

demagogue at the first chance. To achieve the sort of political power that does not evaporate overnight, these mass-appeal fellows, who override and defy the intelligent and substantial elements of their states, have got to possess, as Mr. Long possesses, other qualities; and these answer that second question: 'How do they hold on?'

III

They hold on by building themselves a political machine and running it. To do this requires political cunning and organizing capacity. It involves a combination of ruthless resourcefulness, an intimate skill in the game of precinct politics, and whole-hearted concentration upon control of the party primaries, which are the key to all politics. The primaries are the gates through which all candidates for office must pass before they can get on a ticket. Control of that gate is control of the party. It can be acquired only through machine methods. The flash-in-the-pan fellows lack the qualities for construction and operation of the machine. The Longs have those qualities, which explains why one class drops back while the other goes forward.

From the day he was elected Governor, Mr. Long shrewdly and calculatingly devoted himself to the construction of a machine that would perpetuate his Louisiana power and retain him in office indefinitely. Not neglecting the mass appeal, and without great effort keeping his moronic underworld following entertained sufficiently to hold their interest, he concentrated his real energies upon putting together an organization which would dominate the Democratic primaries. To this end he effectively utilized, not only every scrap of the gubernatorial patronage, which means some ten thousand and more jobs, but all the resources of the state. The cunning and completeness with which this was done enabled Huey to win the battles waged against him, to save himself by a hair from impeachment, to elect himself to the Senate, to substitute a creature of his own to succeed him as Governor, to elect his personal counsel as his Senatorial colleague, to dominate all but one of the Louisiana House delegation, to force the publisher of one of the hostile New Orleans newspapers to eat out of his hand — in short, to reduce his opponents, who include the best people in the state, to a condition of complete impotence.

It sounds like the achievement of a superman, but it is not. One might think that, to attain such complete domination of a state, Mr. Long would have to possess inherent qualities of greatness in addition to his mass appeal and the shrewd and unflinching use of his job to build a primary-controlling organization — but such is not the fact. Nor is his achievement unique in our great free country in which the people rule. It has been done before; it will be done again. The real prototype of Mr. Long is 'Big Bill' Thompson of Chicago, who so long held that great city by the throat, who dominated state as well as municipal politics, who last year, almost single-handed, nominated the Republican candidate for Governor through control of the primary gate, who, still a potent party force, may easily return to the vital office which for so many years he degraded. Thompson's job of holding on to what he had gained was vastly harder than Long's. He operated in a city containing half again as many people as the whole State of Louisiana, and with him the primaries, while vital, were merely preliminary to the general election — a hurdle which does not exist in the one-party common-

wealth presided over by Long. Fundamentally, however, the two men and their methods are much alike. Their political bloods would match. A perfect transfusion could be made.

Thompson with his live rats in their cage, his indecent tirade against the British King, whose nose he advocated punching, and his lurid promises of a greater and grander Chicago, afforded the same kind of mass appeal to essentially the same class of voters as does Long with his denunciation of the multimillionaires, his reference to himself as the 'Kingfish,' his insistent repetition that 2 per cent of the people have 80 per cent of the money. Equally coarse, equally insincere, neither believing for a moment in his own stuff, both grasping completely the importance of the primary, they play the game in the same calculating way, use the same methods, and have attained pretty much the same degree of national prominence. Thompson, for the moment, is out of office, but holds the primary key just the same — and his return is on the cards. Long has slipped from one high office to another, because a primary nomination in his state is equivalent to an election, the independent and intelligent element has no chance to make its weight count between two major parties, and the primary key is all that is needed.

IV

Of course, the national fame of the Thompsons and Longs is based almost entirely upon the space given them in the newspapers, and this is a tremendous asset to them. The newspapers, fully aware of the fact, are powerless to avoid conferring the benefit. These men make news — and news it is impossible not to print. They thrive upon editorial denunciation, ridicule, and scorn.

'Big Bill,' for example, had no better issue than the *Chicago Tribune*, which, in campaign after campaign, assailed him with unrestrained and completely justified violence. Not only is the spectacle of a personal battle between an individual and a great newspaper highly entertaining to the people, but the bulk of them invariably sympathize with the individual. They are on his side. They like to help him get the better of these great engines of publicity, whose back-stage editors are the self-chosen guardians of public morality, the impersonal public mentors and political critics. It is more or less a natural human reaction, from which many a demagogue has profited. Thompson certainly did in Chicago, and the shrewd Huey so completely capitalized the united journalistic opposition in New Orleans that, as stated above, one newspaper caved in, gave up the fight, and is to-day supinely pro-Huey. And Huey, with his tongue in his cheek, is supporting one of its owners for a Federal post. 'I know how to handle these blankety-blanks,' he says; and apparently he does.

It is since he came to the Senate that the national notoriety achieved by Huey as a mass-appeal Governor charged with many ugly things, and an exponent of theatrical coarseness, has been expanded until he is to-day a topic of discussion all over the land. This, of course, has been done through the newspapers. Publicity is the chief aim of nearly all Senators. Without publicity of some kind they might as well not be in Washington. There are a few who are content to earn their publicity by hard work, by consistency in following their convictions, and by supporting or proposing constructive measures. The majority, however, compete for newspaper space by alertly seizing the dramatic moment for oratorical eruption upon some subject

with news value. Success depends upon the relative keenness of their theatrical instinct, their adroitness in presentation, and the previous extent to which they have garnered reputation-building publicity. There are quite a few Senators whose complete time is given over to the hunt for publicity. These men are always engaged in concocting schemes for first-page headlines, and their greatest misery is to miss fire. A good many of the mediocrities are content to 'make' their state papers, but the more able and eloquent aim always for the great metropolitan journals. In the last session of Congress, Huey practically smothered both classes, easily outdistancing all the rest in the frequency of his first-page appearances. A sufficient number of these at once made him good magazine material. Thus his publicity blankets the country, the moronic underworld of the nation regards him as a great man, his position at home is buttressed, and the distaste of the small and ineffectual intelligent minority is deepened.

All this he achieves through the simple expedient of giving a good show. He came to Washington with the reputation of being a crude, rough-and-tumble politician, with an unsavory record and a bad tongue. In Washington he has lived up to his reputation. Blatantly blowing his own trumpet, proclaiming himself the Kingfish, denouncing men of great wealth by name, assailing his party leaders, violating written as well as unwritten Senate rules, filibustering for days at a time, deluging the Senate with words, posing, posturing, and performing all the time. It is all staged stuff, but it makes news. Every correspondent has to write it; every newspaper has to print it. And whether he is favorably or unfavorably presented makes little difference. Sarcasm and invective alike roll off his back like water from the well-known duck. Thick-skinned and impervious to any barb, the Longs and Thompsons want above all else to be noticed, and noticed they are bound to be if they give the sort of show that makes news.

It is easy enough to say that the newspapers should ignore him, but that is not only impractical — it is impossible so long as he craftily plays his part and his show continues to be entertaining. As to stopping him, there is no method by which these Longs and Thompsons can be stopped so long as they hold the primary key and do not lose their balance. The combination of cunning, political skill, and mass appeal is a pretty strong one — strong enough to enable those specially endowed to stay a long time and go a long way.

In the end, they stop themselves. Like Heflin, they become obsessed with their own drivel; they take themselves seriously, grow dull and tiresome. Popular interest subsides, their show flops, and then they are through, because it takes the combination to carry on. Or, occasionally, they swell with egotism to the bursting point, lose their sense of safety, overplay their hand, and thus destroy themselves. Sometimes publicity produces this condition and result, for it can be politically poisonous as well as nourishing. The natural egotist does not take it in large doses without some danger. It sometimes feeds the vanity and destroys the cunning. It seems to me that there are certain indications already that this is happening to Huey Long.

STUDENTS IN A HICK COLLEGE

BY WENDELL BROOKS PHILLIPS

I

ONCE in a while the Georgia mountains are invaded by an outside observer. Not long ago one of my old friends from Boston, one who is skilled in historical research, came here to visit me and the little college in which I teach. He is the provoking sort of person who not only loves to see remote and impossible places, but also insists on prying into their past. Upon encountering a place for the first time, he always asks intently, 'How did it get that way?'

Now, as it happens, his mind had been idly dallying (that is, as idly as he ever allowed it to dally) with the subject of hick colleges. He had heard rumors, he said, of little mountain colleges, almost wholly destitute of money and buildings, which nevertheless managed to offer a liberal training to boys and girls of the Appalachian country. He had heard that I could produce a sample, and was encouraging me to do so.

I saw at once that there was no possibility of peaceful living — no chance of doing any of the things I really wanted to do, such as going out to hunt for persimmons and chinquapins — until I had satisfied him. So I started in.

I showed him our college buildings, cleverly fabricated from old livery stables and boarding houses — and he admired them; I told him of our founder, Brother Spence, whose name has already become a sort of magic legend — and he nodded wisely; I pointed proudly to our faculty, with its Southern aristocrats working peacefully side by side with Yankee preachers — and he took it in with gently smiling jaws. But, after all my efforts, he would not be content.

'You have n't hit it yet!' he declared. 'These things are only the framework. Show me your *students.* Tell me about the homes they come from, their difficulties in getting here, and the things they want to do. Let me know what they think and feel — and then I shall understand why you, and the others who work with you, are so irritatingly resigned to linger here, while the world's stream rushes on!'

I wish I could answer this demand with ease and simplicity. To do so, I should need to know all the subtle and baffling traits of the rural South, which have largely eluded us, in spite of the best and the worst that writers of fiction have done. It is a record which should be quickly seized and cherished, for it is already fading. Already our students are picking up the jargon, are taking on the exterior semblance, of the ordinary American college. Yet at heart they are in many ways profoundly different — and it is this difference, as I have observed it for the last twenty years, which I shall try to show you.

II

Each autumn they come to us anew; and if I were asked to name at once their most striking quality I should venture: Outwardly, it lies in their extraordinarily good manners; inwardly, in the predominance of sentiment over all other considerations.

By good manners I hardly mean familiarity with the latest book of etiquette, but grace and dignity of bearing, with tact and kindness for even the most casual of encounters. As one follows the Appalachian Mountains from Georgia to Pennsylvania, driving northward through the Shenandoah Valley, he will observe that the spelling and grammar of the road signs grow steadily better, while manners grow steadily worse. And when the Mason and Dixon line is reached, the change, within fifty miles, is so abrupt as to be startling. The infinite patience of a Georgia garage man in explaining a difficult route is all too often replaced by a surly insolence which resents the mere thought of 'accommodating' a traveler. This is so disconcerting to many Southerners traveling in the North that they come home quite confirmed in the determination to consign all Yankees forever to outer darkness; and even I, who am not Southern by origin, have been so soothed by Southern manners that I flee from Northern traffic cops as Georgia rabbits flee from 'hound dogs.'

To quote again my Boston observer: 'In the North, cultivated people have good manners; in the South — amazing fact — *everybody* has good manners!'

It is this, more than anything else, I think, which makes classroom work in the Georgia mountains so delightful. If it were merely the surface smoothness of the well-bred, it would not be so. But the friendliness and good will apparent on every hand are genuine. The problem of classroom discipline hardly exists, and that sophisticated boredom which has beclouded the work of so many young instructors in Northern colleges has never made its way among our students.

This courtesy to the teacher, though quite sincere, is sometimes carried to an almost ludicrous extreme — as when my chair, tilted back somewhat farther than is my custom (perhaps on account of my enthusiasm as I lectured on Wordsworth), slipped treacherously from under me. Among my students there was not a laugh, nor even a smile. Since they retained their dignity so beautifully, I managed to retain mine, continuing my lecture uninterruptedly, and pronouncing, if I remember rightly, three learned words while flat on my back on the floor.

III

'Southern sentiment' is, of course, a mere pawn in our collection of stock ideas; but one must live with it to realize its power. Often it is beautiful; but even more often it melts down into a sentimentality which recalls pink ice cream or overripe watermelon. Every year I ask each member of my freshman class in English Composition to write a theme on his favorite war poem. I give no further hint as to what sort of poem it ought to be. Many of the girls show remarkable fondness for a reminiscence of the Civil War entitled 'Somebody's Darling,' while the boys seem most deeply satisfied with 'In Flanders Fields.' In the course of ten years, only one or two have ever discovered Rupert Brooke; and certainly no one has ever stumbled across Siegfried Sassoon!

This sentimental quality pervades the whole tone of life in the rural South. It has encouraged that artificial

chivalry which makes most Southern women so blithely sure that they can eat their cake and have it, too. It has imposed an almost conventional demand that Southern funerals (among all but the most highly placed) should be painful and embarrassing spectacles of abandoned feeling. In school and college life it has inflicted upon us the oratory of the boys and the 'elocution' of the girls.

Of course — in my capacity as potentate of the classroom — I have prepared a lecture to correct all this. I administer it to my classes as a dose of medicine each autumn. I try to point out to my students the intangible line which separates sentiment from sentimentality; I direct their eyes toward that great gulf which lies between Harold Bell Wright, whose works they have all read, and W. H. Hudson, of whom they have never heard! But after I have given my lecture I am not wholly content. I begin to suspect that I am not more than half right, because my understanding has been less than half complete. Even in that terrible weeping over the dead, I ask myself, is there not a humbly frank avowal that we human creatures must bow before a common sorrow, which all our pride is powerless to resist?

If, in the future, understanding shall come, it will grow out of such adventures as this one which I had the other day. I had set out for a solitary walk among the tumbled hills which lie to the west of us. Through the October afternoon the sun shone hot, but the air was cool in the hollows. For several miles I followed the course of Hazel Creek, and came at length to a hill which I had never seen before — an abrupt, conical hill, heavily wooded, and quite surrounded by stretches of bottom land which had once been cornfield. I climbed to the top, and there, on the very summit, I stumbled across two graves, apparently long forgotten.

The place was abandoned to a scraggy growth of oaks and pines which thrust up their trunks between the granite ledges. The larger grave was marked by a thin stone of white marble, but wandering cattle, or the wind, had broken it off, so that it lay half buried in the leaves. After I had lifted it up and propped it in its place, I was strangely carried out of myself by what I read: —

MARY
WIFE OF THOMAS JEFFERSON GRANT
BORN 1814
DIED APRIL 20, 1832

And under this, a verse: —

Her spirit smiles from that bright shore,
And softly whispers, 'Weep no more.'

One hundred years ago, when Mary Grant died, a wife of eighteen years, she was not consigned to any public ground of church or village, but laid in the warm soil of home, on the land which she and her people had loved. And those who placed her there had comforted themselves with visions of a bright shore, from which, as they confidently believed, she smiled.

As I came down the hill I saw the whole picture, and it taught me more than many volumes of Southern lore could have done. I stopped to pull up a root of the sassafras which had inherited the cornfield; and after I had washed it in the water of Hazel Creek I went home chewing its spicy sweetness.

IV

But I am getting all tangled up in Southern manners and Southern sentiment. I set out to tell about students in a hick college. It would be easy to exaggerate the picturesque surface. So brilliant an observer as the late

Cecil J. Sharp, who came from England to collect ballads in our Southern mountains, occasionally fell into this error. In the account which he wrote of his adventure, he speaks with admiring wonder of the skill with which the mountaineer walks slender foot-logs over rushing streams. Now foot-log walking is a very simple art which I taught to my inquiring Boston friend in two lessons, and which I will undertake to teach in three to any Londoner who earnestly wishes to learn.

I shall not dwell on foot-logs and log cabins, however — though you will find plenty of both, if you leave the main highways. By no means all of our students are mountaineers, strictly speaking. When Brother Spence founded the college, he astutely placed it at the foot of the high mountains, rather than among them. Here it would be accessible to the whole Piedmont Plateau, that stretch of red clay hills which lies between the mountains and the coastal plain. Among these woods and gaunt little farms the life of North Georgia has reached its most characteristic development. And from such a background, almost wholly lacking in a knowledge of books, and greatly hampered by inadequate schooling, our students come eagerly to our doors.

Two thirds of them are always turned away — not because we wish to keep them out, but because nearly all of them must earn a part of their expenses, and there are not jobs and scholarships enough to go round. Nor would our buildings hold them if they could afford to stay.

Occasionally a student is so fiercely determined to make his way that he will build an education out of nothing. I recall especially a girl from the mountains who worked harder for her college training than any other student I have ever known. She was brought up by her grandfather, who came down from his farm on Bald Mountain and built a little shack in the woods just out of town. Twenty years ago I remember seeing the old man shooing the child along with a peach sprout, which he shook at her with pretended menace. Nobody knew how the two of them lived. The old man's skill as a blacksmith was a matter of the dim past, and when I knew him he seemed only to tinker with locks and guns which people brought him to repair.

As the child grew up, she had every obstacle of poverty and village prejudice to overcome. She was too near at hand to arouse anybody's missionary zeal. But with grace and wit and tireless persistence she made her way. When at last she reached college, she began to write such freshman themes as I had not read for years. One of her longer papers was a beautiful piece of irony which gave portraits of the various social leaders of the village for whom she had done housework. No names were given, but each sketch was recognizable, and with sharp but genial wit she had reached the essential truth in every case. She hotly resented the menial position into which her employers sought to thrust her.

Of course it might be pointed out that she was logically wrong — that one who undertakes to do household work should not object to dining in the kitchen. But her resentment was natural enough. Young Jonathan Swift was fired with anger against those mighty but shallow men who patronized him at Moor Park. Not only did this rebellious young freshman suspect that the people who looked on her with polite disdain were not really superior to herself, but she also cherished memories of mountain freedom in a wide, if barren, domain. She was quite willing to work, and she did work — desperately — for those who treated

her with even a small degree of sympathetic discernment.

Quite in keeping with her pride, she refused a gift of money for college expenses from one of our Northern trustees. All that she received from the college she paid for with her own work, and she finally took her degree with honors. Ever restless and ambitious, she has gone to the city, as many of our best graduates have done, and, according to the last news I had of her, is doing well in business.

V

The teacher in the rural South, more than in any other part of America, will see reflected in the life of his students pictures from the past. It is as if the Muse of history obligingly stood still for our more careful scrutiny. The speech of the mountaineer is in part Elizabethan, the formal manners of the Southern colonel suggest the eighteenth century, and the predominant social and religious tone of the region recalls — perilous though it be to speak it — the gracious days of Queen Victoria.

All this leaves one with curiously mixed emotions. Sometimes one feels that all the best fruits of modern knowledge have been — not so much repudiated as ignored. In other moods, one looks with a certain admiration at a system of final truth which offers so ready a refuge for the harassed mind. And, since there is much beauty in these pictures from the past, I observe them with divided sympathies. In such a frame of mind, one finds it better to observe, suggest, and learn than to offer dogmatic certainties.

But dogmatic certainties are of tremendous import in the South. My disregard of this fact accounts for the one occasion on which I remember making a student seriously angry. Thus it was not personal wrath, but that deadliest of all hatreds — *odium theologicum*. In clearing up a passage from Milton, I had quoted a few sentences from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, in which an eminent scholar referred to the creation story of Genesis as a myth, and compared it with other myths of the ancient world. Certainly such a statement would not ordinarily create excitement in a college classroom. But I noticed a marked agitation in one member of the class. He was a man whose education had been delayed, and who was somewhat older than I; hence he felt that he could speak freely.

After class he confronted me, white-faced and trembling. He offered no argument, but demanded by what right I was robbing young people of their religion. His earnest concern, his genuine goodness, compelled respect; his intellectual attitude, as it seemed to me, deserved only scorn. I tried to administer a suitable portion of each; but from that time forth I was to him a corrupter of youth, and the *Encyclopædia Britannica* an heretical work which should be torn from the library shelves and burned on the altar of an unchanging faith.

The incident itself is unusual, but the attitude which it represents is not. And it takes us back to that untroubled time when the great textual critics were just beginning their deadly work — to the time when Darwin was still harmlessly sailing around the world on His Majesty's Ship, the *Beagle*.

VI

These matters of controversy are easily forgotten, however, when one comes to know his students as human beings. Last June I found myself in the depths of the Nantahala Mountains with a newly graduated senior, who was

showing me his home country. He had grown up among these mountains, which lie far beyond our familiar Blue Ridge, over in North Carolina. We were accompanied by a timid young sophomore, fresh from the Georgia cotton mills.

All day long we had tramped with packs on our backs, now and then stopping on the sunlit crest of a ridge to look at the country below. On one such occasion the senior remarked, 'Maybe you think it's mighty pretty up here now; but in October, when the leaves have turned, it's so beautiful that it seems like a man can't hardly stand it.' Knowing that such expression of feeling was rare with him, I took this as a confession of faith, a declaration of that love for the soil which is so swiftly vanishing from the modern world. I was truly thankful that college had not robbed him of *his* religion.

We spent the night on Winespring Bald, where the last of the North Carolina panthers are said to lurk. In order to escape the sharp wind, we camped down a bit from the top, sheltered by gnarled chestnut trees. We were so far from any house, from any trail, that we could forget the new and alien civilization which beat at the gates of the mountains. I threw more wood on the fire, leaned back against the tree roots, and peacefully listened for panthers. But, since the panthers were slow getting started, I had to be content with a couple of hoot owls, which called to each other from opposite sides of the ravine.

Our isolation and the firelight invoked a strange brotherhood among us. We could pause for a moment, and dispassionately consider the ways of gods and men. The senior's life already had unity and wisdom. Whether he stayed in his native valley or went away, he would always be a part of it, and would carry its peace with him. I, too, had found a restless sort of peace. But our sophomore, with his cotton-mill childhood still heavy on him, was troubled about many things. Down there at the college, he seemed to peer wistfully at the world, wondering what it was all about. Up here on the mountain, he was suddenly released, and seemed glad that we let him do most of the talking.

'I aim to be a preacher,' he said, 'though there's a lot o' times when I think I ought not to be. A person can't believe all the things preachers used to believe. But when I git to worryin' about it, I always fall back on one thing: there's a lot o' people in this world that need help. I don't know whether I'll ever git through no theological school or not — seems like I ain't doin' much good with that Greek I'm a-takin'.'

The sophomore paused a moment and looked quizzically around to see if we appreciated his difficulties with Greek. Then he continued: 'But I know something about the cotton-mill folks. Seems like they always wanted me around when they was in trouble. . . . I seen a boy git killed once. I hope I won't never see nothin' like it ag'in. I was workin' in the mill, an' several of us had started up on the freight elevator. A green boy that had jist come down from the mountains about a week before tried to jump on after the elevator had started. He caught on with his hands and tried to pull himself up, but he could n't make it in time. He was drawed up through a crack about two inches wide, an' I reckon it broke every bone in his chest.

'I don't see how he done it, but he lived all that night. An' while he was fightin' for breath he talked all the time. "Don't tell my mammy about this," he says. "Her an' Pappy did n't want me to come down to the cotton

mill — an' now I've done gone an' got myself killed. Don't tell 'em about it — jist tell 'em I've gone off somewheres!"

'No, I hope I won't never see nothin' like that ag'in,' continued the sophomore. 'But if I'm goin' to be a preacher I reckon I'll have to. . . . Don't you reckon, Professor, that I could help folks — especially young folks — back there at the cotton mill, if I was to study hard enough?'

The firelight shone on his face, half grotesque, half pathetic. I recalled his dogged persistence, his faithfulness, and the extent to which he had already improved.

'Help people?' I queried. 'Yes — yes, I think you can, and will.'

He was satisfied with that. And the eyes of all of us were heavy. To roll up in a blanket, to stretch out on the ground, to go to sleep — that is a gift, with which, fortunately, all of us were endowed. Thus passed our first night in the Nantahalas.

VII

It was some such tale as this which I told my inquiring friend from Boston on those afternoons when we walked over the Georgia hills together.

'Well,' I declared on the afternoon which I knew would be the last one, 'you have heard all about students in a hick college. You know what the place is like. But have you found out how it got that way?'

He smiled an inscrutable Bostonian smile which lit up the Georgia landscape like some exotic gleam. 'You expect too much,' he said. 'Nobody will ever find out exactly how any place got the way it is. But I have discovered enough to fill a nice ponderous volume — if only I had the power to write it.'

So he went back to Boston, with all his notes and paraphernalia. And I for one, waiting here on the banks of Hazel Creek, devoutly hope that power will be granted him. I long to see that ponderous volume!

SALT OF THE EARTH

BY ROSE ELIZABETH REISS

I

JAMES told Tillie about it when he went home for dinner that day. One of the drivers had brought him the news. 'I just can't work like I oughta,' he said. 'Seems like it takes all the starch outa me.'

He had n't minded when he 'd heard about the Company closing the first store. There always had been stores that did n't pay. Usually, though, they 'd open again in a better location. But the second one — when he 'd heard about that, he 'd been upset.

Now another — the third in two months. If they were closing stores, his might be next. True, he was doing the business. He 'd been watching mighty close; always had. But since that second store had been closed . . . When he counted the receipts at night now, he could feel his heart pounding, as though he were frightened.

He 'd felt so much a part of the Company. He even owned five shares of stock. But now — well, it was different somehow. The Company had become a Force, something he could n't fight against; a force whose ways were incalculable.

He tried to explain it to Tillie. 'It 's so unexpected-like,' he said. 'It was like my store; but better than my store. Because anybody can open his own little store, if he can scrape up the money. But when he can suit the Company, he must be good.'

Thirty-five years he 'd been with the Company. He liked to talk about it. 'Yessir,' he told each new delivery boy, 'I started just like you. And I did n't get the money you 're gettin', either. And old Hobbs, the manager then, he was a mean cuss. We *worked* in those days, I tell you!'

He could remember when they 'd made him manager. Tillie and he had been talking about getting married. You could, on a manager's salary. He 'd felt it might be — but there was Collins. Collins was a big husky fellow. They might think he looked better behind the counter. 'And say, you do look lost in them aprons,' Collins would tease him. 'We 'll have to be tellin' the Company to send boy sizes.'

Well, he 'd never been strong-looking. Tillie did her best to feed him up, but, as she said, 'The more you eat, the fatter I get.' But he could work — better than the best of them.

'They could n't kick you out after the way you 've worked for them,' Tillie said indignantly.

James shook his head. One did n't question the ways of the Company.

'But I don't know what you 're fussin' so for,' Tillie said easily. 'You ain't heard nothing 'cept they 've closed three stores, and here you get yourself in a state.'

'But if they did?' James stared at Tillie. 'I never thought . . . I felt so . . . why . . . it 'd be like somebody told me you 'd run off with another man.'

Tillie laughed comfortably. 'How you talk!'

He did n't feel the same way — no, not even about going back to the store. He 'd never taken the full hour for lunch, and Tillie complained continually about having to get dinner in the middle of the day because he refused to come home for it at night. It was too busy between five and seven. Tillie always had sandwiches ready for him at noon to take with him for his supper. But now, he told himself, it was only a duty and a habit.

II

He always gave a quick glance around when he entered the store. Of course the boys had n't got the orders out yet! He was like the lover of a faithless mistress — joy might be gone, but fidelity was deep-rooted. 'Don't you know Mrs. Williams is waiting for her order?' he said furiously. 'Believe me, you can't get anywhere with the Company that way!'

'Who cares?' Gene said. 'Say, Mr. Hicks, I ain't plannin' to stay in this hole too long.'

'You kids nowadays think you're pretty smart. A rollin' stone gathers no moss. Let me tell you, that's mighty good sense. I stuck with the Company. I knew they were a tough outfit, but all the better! When they made me manager I knew I had to be good to get it. And I ain't never been sorry. A good steady job and my own boss.' Even as he said it, James's heart contracted. His own boss! He had thought, almost, that he *owned* the store.

There was a bit of a rush then — customers coming in. Those were the times James liked best. Not that he was ever idle! When there were no customers, there was the stock to keep in order and the clerks to be reminded of their lapses and the window to be fixed and orders to get out. Time never hung heavy for James Hicks!

But this? Why, everybody in the neighborhood knew James! Some of them buying from him for thirty-five years. And everybody asking for Mr. Hicks!

James would never get used to his false teeth. As he smiled, his long upper lip and thin cheeks gripped the plates. Perhaps it was the strain of maintaining that grimace of obsequiousness, while he kept up a steady stream of talk, that had worn the furrows in his cheeks and forehead. Perhaps the frenzy with which he worked contributed.

James always said he 'just ate up work.' He never felt tired — except occasionally when he went home and gave himself time to sit down. 'And who would n't be tired?' Tillie said. 'Working like you was possessed. All day, from six in the morning till nine at night, and on Saturdays until twelve. If you 'd push more work on the others . . .'

'You can't depend on them,' James explained. 'It ain't like when I was startin' out. Boys are different today.' He *had* thought of it when he hired Bert. Bert was tall; he could do the reaching. But somehow he could n't seem to remember not to do things himself.

'I can't see how you do it,' Tillie concluded. Tillie never found any need for hurry. There were no devils after her!

III

It was dark these mornings at six o'clock. But 'six o'clock, sharp' was James's pride. 'That 's my rule. Never been five minutes late in twenty years.' Sick? No, he was never sick. 'If you just don't coddle yourself . . .' He could n't think what Mrs. Watts

would say if he were n't there in time for her. She stopped in every morning on her way to Mass.

The clerks did n't get in until later. 'It keeps me on the hop,' he told Mrs. Watts. 'But gosh, I don't mind that. Keeps the blood circulating. Heh, heh!'

The door opened, letting in the raw morning chill. James rubbed his hands briskly. 'Ah, good morning, Mrs. Hostetter. Out gettin' the morning air too? A pound of butter? Yes, ma'am.' Rushing about madly as he talked, his grin set. 'How about some canned goods, Mrs. Hostetter? A special on them this week. And you know, when Hulburt has a special! Coffee? Yes, ma'am. How about some bacon? 'Morning, Mrs. Heffler.'

When there was a bit of a lull, the sidewalk must be swept. It was n't really James's job, but you could n't leave it like that until Gene ambled in!

To-day would be a long day. Sometimes the boys grumbled about the late closing on Saturday. Funny that some men should be like that! What was a man's life if it was n't his work and gettin' ahead?

He let Gene and Bert go home at eleven o'clock. There'd been no chance for them to do the reddin' up. Well, let them go. He could work in peace. The window, now — that ought to be perked up a bit for Monday. He liked to start the week right.

Tillie had been angry. She'd stayed up waiting for him, and the house got so cold! She was cranky all Sunday morning. Funny how women were! Only time Tillie got angry was when he worked what she called 'too hard.'

IV

He told her when he came home Monday noon. 'A mighty good thing I stayed to fix the window Saturday night.' Tillie glanced at him quickly. Something in his tone . . .

'There I was just waitin' on Mrs. Pickett — and you know how long it takes her. She never can remember what she wants.'

'Well, what about it?' Tillie asked.

'Well, where was I? . . . Oh yeh, waitin' on Mrs. Pickett. Well, I 'd just handed her a package of bacon when I see his big shiny limousine pull up in front of my window.'

'Whose limousine?' Tillie asked.

'Mr. Alton's. The big boss.'

'No!' Tillie gasped. The small beady black eyes blinked behind the folds of ruddy flesh.

'Well,' James continued, relishing his importance, 'I did n't know him. He'd never come around himself. They send district managers and vice presidents, but C. J. A. himself! Somehow, though, I had an idea. Sort of a feeling.'

'Well, what did you do?'

'Well, I just finished waitin' on Mrs. Pickett and then I says, "What can I do for you, sir?" — very polite and smiling.'

'What did he say?' Tillie demanded.

'Give me a chance, woman. He says, "Good morning, Hicks!" I says, "Good morning, sir." He says, "I'm Mr. Alton." I says, "I guessed as much." So he smiles, kinda. But I could feel my heart thumping away, and I was wonderin' if my face was white or red. I knew it turned color. "And how is business?" he says. "Oh, pretty good, Mr. Alton," I says. "Of course I'm never satisfied if I'm not increasin' my sales."'

'What did you want to go and tell him that for?'

'That's all right. "But," I says, "I've not fallen below. And for these times that's doin' good. All the merchants on the street tell me business has fallen off something terrible." So

Mr. Alton nods a coupla times. Then he says, "Do you mind if I look around a bit?" But he's just bein' polite, because he's started lookin' already. Then he says, "How are your sales on coffee?" "Mighty brisk, sir," I says. Then he says, "Good morning," and he goes. I walked out to the car. I was able because there was only one customer and Bert was waitin' on him, though his eyes was gogglin' outa his head.

'After he went, I just felt weak — and awful tired. Tillie, it was like, all of a sudden, I was old. Funny thing it was. Everything hurt me. I even had to take my teeth out when the boys was n't lookin'. That kinda brought me round, though — I could n't let the boys see. . . . So I started bawlin' Bert out for not tendin' to his business when Mr. Alton was there, and I hustled Gene out with the orders. . . . But I'm terrible worried, Tillie. When the President himself comes . . . I don't know, Tillie. What would I do?'

There was n't much that Tillie could say. It did look funny, and no foolin'. What James would ever do . . . she did n't dare think. Land, it was bad enough with him on Sundays! The man fidgeted so, he almost drove her crazy!

V

All the savor of life was gone for James. Working when you thought it might all be over any day was n't the same as when you thought it was going on and on as long as you lived.

It was all right whenever he could keep from thinking. But — 'I'll be waitin' on a customer and goin' along all right,' he told Tillie. 'Then all of a sudden it'll come to me. Maybe next week they'll be tellin' me it's all over. Then what's the use of all this? What've I been workin' for then? And I feel like a fool. Because if the work don't matter, what am I livin' for?'

Some days he felt it was the uncertainty of it that was so hard. If they would tell him and have it over! Maybe he could get another job. Maybe *they'd* get him another job. Not that it would be the same. James's chest felt hard and lumpy. No, it would n't be the same. It could n't ever be his store the way this was.

He worried about the way he'd acted when Mr. Alton had called. Perhaps he should have brought out his records. Had the place been looking tidy? If only he could remember! But he'd been so upset! He thought of asking Bert if he had looked nervous when Mr. Alton spoke to him, but thought it was no use getting too familiar with the help. A manager had to keep his dignity.

VI

The week went by. On Monday, that man from across the street came in. Funny — he *was* coming into the store a lot. A man — what did he do that he was home so much? When the man came in again he'd have to try to find out.

He'd heard that the Company sent out investigators. Spies, that's what they were! It was hard to go on working.

Mrs. Jameson remarked when she came to give her order: 'You're not lookin' so good, Mr. Hicks. You work too hard. I always tell Mrs. Hicks, "I don't see how your husband can go climbing round like a monkey all day" — no offense, Mr. Hicks. "It ain't human!" Don't be foolish! No use killin' yourself for any company.'

Once James would have argued such heresy heatedly. Now he smiled wearily. 'Guess I'm not as young as I was, Mrs. Jameson.'

The man came in again at noontime. James gripped his plates to bare his teeth. Steady now, steady. 'Yes, sir, what can I do for you?'

It was hard for James to jump up on the counter to reach for the can of beans. His legs trembled. He sprang down with a forced agility. If the man *were* an investigator . . . You had to look spry!

'You're new in the neighborhood, ain't you, sir?' James jerked his face into its grimace. That was the stuff — just act natural!

'Yes, rather,' the man said.

'Live on the street?' James persisted. They called him 'the man from across the street,' but all they knew was that he had been seen crossing the street in front of the store. 'We could deliver your orders. Any time you like, sir.'

'Well, any time we can't come in. We don't use so much, though.'

'Big or little, it's all the same to us,' James said.

'Thanks,' the man said. He walked out before James could pursue his inquiry.

'D' ya know where that man lives?' he asked Gene.

'Nope. Just see him lately.' Gene's freckled face looked at James inquisitively.

'Fix up that stand,' James said gruffly. 'What you standin' round for? How you think it looks when customers come in, with the place like this?'

The man came in frequently. He never bought much. James tried to wait on him — once even told Bert, 'You gotta tend to that order,' so that he might talk to him.

'You can't get anything outa him,' James told Tillie. 'Well, one thing, if they're figgerin' on givin' up the store, they're sure goin' to a lot of trouble first. First the President and now this inves — '

'Now, James,' Tillie objected. 'You don't know if this man is from the Company. Maybe he's outa work. Maybe,' — Tillie was inspired, — 'maybe he works nights!'

James tried hard to think that Tillie might be right. But he worried. 'It's like that thing — what d'ya call it? — robot,' he told Tillie. 'That's what I'm like. Hustlin' round same as usual, but my heart ain't in it.'

It was right after this that the man started talking a lot when he came in. That was bad! Before, James had tried to talk to him to draw information, but now that the man developed this sudden loquaciousness James felt sure that his suspicions were right. The man had n't given a good enough report, and now he was trying to see what he could find out!

James's nerves were playing him unaccustomed tricks. If a man came in, his pulse fluttered wildly. When he had to count his receipts at night, he broke out in a cold sweat. Suppose they had fallen off! He tried to push goods as he never had before. He worked coldly, his heart heavy, but with a crazed determination.

Tillie did a bit of investigating of her own. She went to the other Company store about eight blocks away and asked if the man — 'he has carroty, bristly hair and a big mouth and uneven teeth' — had been seen there. They were sure he had n't. Then she tried to find out if the man really lived on the street. Mrs. Haines, in 1183, thought a man who lived in the third floor rear might be the one. She could n't be sure.

Tillie could n't pursue the subject too long. After all, one had one's pride! Everybody thought James was so well fixed. And then there was always the chance that it might all be nothing. Tillie could be more sanguine than James.

VII

It was just about the time that James had almost determined to write to the district manager, to ask if there was any likelihood of his losing his store, that the letter came. It was about ten o'clock. James was just weighing Mrs. Heller's butter.

The postman handed the letter to James. 'Fine day, Mr. Hicks,' he said. 'Great,' James said, and gripped his plates for a newer smile than he'd been aiming at Mrs. Heller.

It was a large smooth envelope. James stole a glance. 'How about some nice cheese? Just came in, Mrs. Heller.' It had a Company stamp — M. M. Hulburt & Company! James's breath came with troublesome unevenness.

He put the letter on the shelf behind him. 'So that will be all?' — with automatic alertness. He pushed the package at her. Mrs. Heller looked somewhat surprised. Now!

His hands were trembling frightfully. He looked toward Bert. If it were — if it were bad — Bert must not see. He did n't want to show . . . There was a jagged tear in the envelope. He looked at it dazedly. He always opened envelopes so neatly!

'My dear Mr. Hicks . . . excellent service . . . clever merchandising. . . .' James's ribs ached queerly. 'So that even in this depression . . . We have, as you know, been forced to close some stores in the same district with No. 49.' James put his hand to his throat. All color left his face. He turned a sickly green. Store No. 49 — he tried to fix his attention. . . . Store No. 49 — why, that was *his* store! His hand shook; the type on the page flickered. 'We are happy to inform you that your exceptional work under these difficult conditions is much appreciated by this Company, and we shall hope to show our appreciation in a more practical way as business improves. . . .'

There was a soap box near, and he sat down. He felt limp. He read the letter over again — slowly, carefully — to make sure. Slowly the color came back in his face. But he felt curiously empty. He tried to think. He — he did n't have to be afraid any more!

Why, it was more than that! He'd had a letter from the big chief — from old C. J. A. himself! The President of the Company had written to him! Yes, there it was — signed in his own hand — 'C. J. Alton,' and under it, 'PRESIDENT.' They had stopped all other business — an important man like C. J. A. had stopped all other business to write to James Hicks, to tell him how invaluable he was to the Company!

He sent Gene over to call Tillie. Another man might have left the store, he reflected with pride. But not James Hicks!

James showed it to everybody. 'Yessirree, the President of the Company himself! And I've heard people say corporations ain't got no heart!'

He kept the letter in his inside coat pocket where he could get at it easily. After a while, the paper split a bit along one of the creases, and then James bought a parchment envelope to keep it in.

It was too bad the Company had to let Gene go, of course — cutting expenses. Made a little more work. But James could do it. He liked work! He did n't want the President to think he'd made a mistake — that he could n't depend on him!

THREE MARRIAGES

The House of Exile. III

BY NORA WALN

I

It was the afternoon of the Feast of Lanterns Eve, in 1922. Above her sewing table Mai-da had tacked a color sketch of the Pearl Fairy, holding open her oyster-shell home, as a pattern from which to create her costume for the Lanterns Eve masque. She had shaped an oyster shell of whalebone, in size to close comfortably about herself, covered it with gray cotton cloth touched up realistically with white and green paint, and lined it with a fine shirring of pink gauze. It lay finished on her bed. She had fringed the pale pink chiffon veil that makes the fairy invisible, cleaned her best satin slippers, and completed the basque waist of the shell-pink velvet dress. It awaited the attachment of a wide *bouffant* ruffled skirt.

But she had found the task of hemming and attaching the tiers of tiny ruffles more than she was equal to in the time remaining before the masque. This circumstance had forced her to trust her cousins concerning her intent to dance in the street masquerade at which the guilds frolic.

She told of the note she had received from Erh-sung, the Manchu Prince, asking her to come as the Pearl Fairy to meet him, who would be disguised as the Fisherman's Son; also how she had put her consenting answer under the loose stone behind the shrine of the Old Man in the Moon, in the Street of the Purple Bamboo Forest, which had been her letter box for communication with him for many months.

So, as the wives were all safely out, Su-ling and Ching-mei lectured Mai-da wisely on marriage while they sewed with diligence. I polished the jade earrings Mai-da had promised to give her servant Faithful Duck if she got safely out through the Gate of Compassion and in again. When the stitching was finished, Mai-da donned the costume and showed us how she could dance the pageant in her pink satin slippers. She held the shell in her hands and mischievously closed its dullness around her dainty beauty.

We had tidied the room before the pat-pat of the chair bearers' feet sounded at the Orchid Door. The wives found Mai-da in the kitchen, assisting at the preparation of the evening meal.

Clouds covered the moon in the early night. Mai-da squeezed her slim loveliness through the Gate of Compassion and handed one earring to Faithful Duck. A Fisherman's Son kept tryst with her at the homestead wall. He flirted in a dance all down the mystic lantern-decorated streets, returning her frolic with quick response. She was puzzled, thrilled, and half frightened.

She knew that he was not Erh-sung. Yet he enchanted her with his charm.

They dined with other masqueraders at the Abode of Orchids. He brought her safely back to the Gate of Compassion just before dawn.

Faithful Duck awaited her there. When she was again under the shadow of the Goddess of Mercy and had lit a tall taper of thanksgiving, her escort recalled her to the door with a low whistle. Then he lifted his mask — and she knew that the gay companion of her escapade was her favorite uncle, Keng-lin.

Next day, when the Elder's Wife sent Mai-da to polish the brasses in the Hall of Ancestors, Uncle Keng-lin followed her and told her how her letter had come into his possession. An itinerant priest had seen her put it behind the shrine in the Street of the Purple Bamboo Forest. He secured it, followed her home, and sat down at the To and From the World Gate to sell it to the first man of the family who came out.

He had demanded five hundred dollars. Keng-lin had got the letter for three hundred, and sealed the priest's lips against gossiping Mai-da's name all along his holy pilgrimage to Wu Tai Shan in Shansi.

II

Two days after the Feast of Lanterns Wei-sung, the Family Elder, called Mai-da to the library. Five cards proposing marriage were laid face down on his writing table. He told her to take up one. Thus she, who over a period of many years had managed to avoid betrothal, selected her husband. And Wei-sung, reluctant to break his family circle by giving any girl in marriage, was saved from making a choice for her beyond giving his sanction to the Family-in-Council's decision that any one of the five was suitable.

From then on Mai-da, who is bred of centuries of folk who accept marriage as a duty, accepted her fate with philosophy, and seemingly without undue curiosity concerning her future husband.

Uncle Keng-lin carried a red card, identical in size and shape with the proposal, and containing, similarly, the record of her year, month, day, and hour of birth, to the man's homestead, which is but three streets away.

When he had gone, the Family Elder put the proposed groom's name with Mai-da's on the altar in the Hall of Ancestors, between the life tablets of the founder of the House of Exile and his mate.

'Marriage,' Shun-ko explained to me, 'is a contract between two families, and must be made with the free consent of both families. A maid is wed in accord with the wisdom of her clan, and we take great care to have our descendants mate well. The name of Mai-da's proposed husband will lie with her name for three days on our family altar. Mai-da's name will lie with his name for three days on his homestead family altar. Only if there is peace in both households during this time will the considered alliance go further. If criticism of their union be spoken in either homestead, the matter will be dropped. But as the cards are on the altars, no person will speak without real concern.'

Late on the third day, Mai-da and I were in the central room of the Three Eastern Courtyards. We were searching for a volume of Li T'ai-po's poems, from which her mother had promised to read to us, when the Elder's servant came in and put down a padded wicker tea basket. We realized that a visitor had been announced at the gate. Reasoning that we could not avoid being met in the courtyard if we went, we stayed behind a lacquer screen. The Elder entered, pulling his ceremonial robe about him.

This room was the Hall of Dignity of the original homestead, and is the place where especially honored callers are received. The doors were flung open. From our peep-crack, we saw that the Family Elder had ordered the visitor's sedan chair to be carried to this inner court. We recognized it as the chair of the Elder of the House of Mai-da's proposed husband.

An uncle of that house descended from it. He was dressed in a richly ornamented gown of many colors. A servant accompanied him. The servant spread a red mat. The master knelt before the Elder of Lin, despite the latter's polite attempts to stop him. He presented a betrothal contract. This, he announced, was signed by his Family Elder and the four heirs-in-succession to the Family Eldership. 'I am the voice of our homestead,' he ended, 'who are united in eagerness to welcome the daughter of Lin.'

The men drank tea. They talked of crops, of weather, of political conditions. We grew weary in our cramped closeness. Finally, when the call had stretched to proper politeness, the visitor asked to pay his respects to the First Lady of the homestead. The servant preceding them with the red mat, they left to go to Kuei-tzu's apartment. Then we slipped back to the Springtime Bower.

After the caller had gone from the homestead, Kuei-tzu sent for Mai-da. She gave her the betrothal gift from the Lady in First Authority in her future husband's homestead — a gold bracelet set with three rubies.

Next morning Uncle Keng-lin rode out in the Elder's chair. He was accompanied by Camel-back. Camel-back carried a red mat. Uncle Keng-lin had a contract signed by the Elder of Lin and four heirs-in-succession, also a gift of jade coat buttons from the First Lady of Lin to the betrothed bridegroom. In the afternoon, the Elder of the groom's homestead came to the House of Lin to ask for the wedding date.

The nineteenth day of the Peony Moon, and the birthday of the Protectress of Blossoms, was chosen. This is Mai-da's favorite day.

As soon as sweet cookies could be baked, and while they were still warm from the oven, the groom's mother sent a red basket of them to Mai-da. These cookies are called 'phœnix-and-dragon cakes.' Two servants garbed in wedding coats of green and red brought the basket. They carried it on a red pole by way of the principal streets of the village. So it was made public that the betrothal between the two houses was complete and the wedding day named.

Mai-da had presented to Kuei-tzu a list of the homesteads to which she wished to intimate her approaching marriage so that they might help with preparations. Kuei-tzu vetoed two names and reminded Mai-da to include a lady patron of her birth who had married a second time and was now domiciled in Shantung. Each phœnix-and-dragon cake had the wedding date stamped into it with red sugar. The cakes were divided into packets of five. The packets were wrapped in wedding paper, then nestled around with red cotton, and sealed up in lacquer wedding-cake boxes. They were dispatched by messenger or by post to each household on the approved list.

These homesteads responded with gifts appropriate to the bride's dowry. They included garments suitable for addition to the trousseau, household furniture, bedding, crockery, silverware, kitchen utensils, and jewelry.

Seamstresses helped the women of the family sew gowns of flowered silk for all the family, as well as fashion the wedding garments for the bride.

III

Mai-da was teased about her future husband. She was laughingly told that he had flat feet, a terrible temper, a pock-marked face, a beard, untidy habits, a finicky appetite, a weak digestion, the body of a giant, and the mind of a simpleton. She met this jesting with admirable self-control. But she bartered away her birthday camera to her boy cousin, Tsai-fu, in return for half a dozen snapshots of her betrothed. So she satisfied herself that he was the man whom she had seen two years previously, worshiping the God of Knowledge at the City Temple.

Red cards of invitation to the 'Maid's Feast' were sent to friends and relatives, so timed as to reach them ten days before the feast. They responded with many more gifts, among them four gowns, one for each season; in these every woman resident in the homestead of Mai-da's betrothed had put stitches of welcome.

Hau-li was busy in court and garden coaxing the peonies with pruning knife, liquid fertilizers, and sprinkling basin. Mai-da and I thought that the showing of flowers and buds was perfect. In varieties of every size, from the round of a summer fan to the rim of a humming bird's nest, they gave dignity and fragrance to the House of Exile. They rose, on glazed tile terraces facing the south side of the lapis-lazuli pond, in a hill of color shading through dark plum, wine red, sunset rose, sunrise pink, apple bloom, and cloud white.

Reed awnings were put up to shade the courts, crimson carpets laid in brilliant pattern on the tiles. Rosy banners were fastened to float on the spring breezes over the courtyard walls. The house pillars were wrapped in bindings of silk. Vermilion curtains were hung in doorways. All the decorative treasures of ivory, porcelain, bronze, and jade were brought from chests and set where their antiquity showed best. Scrolls of red and gold were pasted on either side of the To and From the World Gate, announcing to all who passed that Mai-da, daughter of the House of Lin, would go out to complete the House of Tseng, as wife to Tseng Huai-ching, on the birthday of the Protectress of Blossoms.

Friends from a distance, and women relatives and friends who desired to assist in the preparations, began to arrive four days before the wedding day. Courtesy demands that feast food be ready to welcome these guests, so there were continuous bustle and stir in the kitchens a week before the wedding.

With thoughtful consideration, the groom's household sent to the bride's household gifts of wine, cakes, roast geese, braised duck, pickled pork, spiced mutton, sugared nuts, candied fruits, and sweetmeats prepared by their recipes. With equally thoughtful consideration, the bride's family, realizing that early guests would be arriving at the groom's house too, sent gifts of wine, cakes, roast geese, braised duck, pickled pork, spiced mutton, sugared nuts, candied fruits, and sweetmeats made by their recipes. There was a delightful confusion of servants carrying baskets between the two households — in itself a source of happiness, as carriers are tipped each time they deliver a parcel in Chinese homes.

In the forenoon of the day before the bride was sent, bearers in brilliant wedding garments carried Mai-da's dowry to her new home. Musicians played wind, string, and hand instruments at the front and at the rear of this procession. It was ninety-one carrying poles long. Each pole was loaded with what two men could carry. The large furniture was wrapped in red covers. The smaller articles and the wearing apparel were packed in sheets. But a Swiss

clock with a bird that sang the hour was carried uncovered so that the village might enjoy it.

Camel-back walked behind the procession. He was entrusted with Mai-da's jewel box and with the inventory of her possessions.

On the marriage eve, the 'Maid's Feast' was held in the Hall of Hospitality. The hall was decorated with the symbols of happiness and illuminated with scarlet candles. Mai-da's mother presided. Mai-da came to the hall when the first course had been served and poured wine into each guest's cup.

She was dressed, for the last time, in the costume of girlhood. Her hair had been brushed to a blue-black gloss. It hung in a thick plait far below her waist. Faithful Duck had tinted her lips with ruby. Her eyes were bright with excitement. She was exquisite in the straight bamboo-green dress made for the occasion.

On the evening before she leaves home, each girl of the House of Exile dines alone with the First Lady of Authority. Mai-da dined with Kuei-tzu. Then she burned the incense of farewell in the Hall of Ancestors, and was sent to bed.

IV

The pad-pad of cloth shoes on the dusty road heralded the approach of the bridal chair before dawn. At sunrise the flutes played the 'Call for the Bride,' and the To and From the World Gate creaked open.

Faithful Duck hurried out. She returned to our room to say that the groom's musicians numbered thirty-two; that the bridal chair had eight bearers; that there were two green chairs each with four bearers, one of which had held the groom's aunt, who had the bridal cloak and red handkerchief, and had gone to drink tea with Mai-da's mother, the other to carry herself, Faithful Duck, the bride's good serving matron; also more banner-men than she had been able to count, as they moved about so much — bearers, musicians, banner-men, all in new wedding coats of scarlet satin, with heavy thread-of-gold embroidery.

Shun-ko came. She ordered Faithful Duck to stop her chatter and fetch bath water for her mistress. She laid out Mai-da's lotus-perfumed wedding undergarments. She hid her emotion by scolding Mai-da for being too lenient with her servant. Another aunt came and painted Mai-da's alarming pallor with a liquid lotion. Then Ching-mei used her lip rouge on the bride's mouth, saying that it was absolutely proof against coming off on the nuptial cup.

A cousin came to say that the bridegroom had arrived, and was now kneeling before the Elders making formal request for their daughter to 'complete himself,' and would soon return to his homestead to await Mai-da.

The wedding dress was slipped over Mai-da's head and adjusted. It was admired by all the women and children, who were now clustered in the room, in the doorway, and around the window. Mai-da had been a quiet doll to paint and dress, but suddenly she began to laugh with shrill hysteria. No one could stop her. The Elder's wife sent word that everyone excepting Shun-ko, who 'has sense,' and Faithful Duck, was to leave the Springtime Bower. Uncle Keng-lin came with his table lute and played lullabies to quiet Mai-da's nerves.

It was noon when Mai-da came to the Hall of Dignity. She bowed to the guests. She knelt in farewell to the Elders and to her parents. Her father fastened the groom's cloak about her shoulders. Her mother dropped his handkerchief as a veil over her face.

The family cried, 'May you be as happy as the maid from Canton!' Crackers were fired in loud explosion. Mai-da was lifted into the bride's chair. The chair was closed. The sealing papers were fastened.

Kuei-tzu, Lady of First Authority in the Lin homestead, put her name on the seals. The drums rapped the call to start. The cymbals clanged assent. Flutes gave the 'Wail of Departure.' The groom's aunt and Faithful Duck got into the two green chairs. Lifting poles creaked. The bride's procession passed out of the house of her girlhood; the To and From the World Gate was locked behind her.

The clan of Lin gathered from far and near, feasting and talking and playing table games to pass the time, waited until the invitation should come from the clan of Tseng inviting the bride's mother to the 'After the Rites of the Marriage Bed Breakfast,' which is assurance that the groom's family are satisfied.

Thus Mai-da went to her husband.

V

Born in 1904, Tai-chun was married in the Chrysanthemum Moon, when he was eighteen. The present Elder of Lin is industrious in keeping the admonition of the sages: 'Marry your sons as soon as they are grown.' By the marriage of a son he can bring into his homestead yet another charming young woman, descendant of one of his friends, and also fill the homestead courtyards still more full with beautiful Lin children.

The messenger delivering the announcements of the birth of Lin Tai-chun, great-grandnephew of the Lin Family Elder, crossed paths with the messenger delivering announcements of the birth of Pien Wei-ling, great-granddaughter of the Pien Family Elder. Stopping to gossip, the messengers agreed that the newborn boy and girl would certainly marry. This supposition was also voiced in every family that received the birth announcements.

Before the 'Rounding of the Year,' Tai-chun's mother received and accepted an invitation to spend a moon in the Pien courtyards, during which the babies shared the same cradle. Some time later, Wei-ling's mother returned the visit. The children sat in a double pushcart and each had a hand string to the kite that old Camel-back made and flew for them.

From then until the 'Cycle of Ten' they were together a month or two every year, staying with their nurses in the Garden of Children either of the Lin or of the Pien homestead. The year that they were twelve, Tai-chun wove Wei-ling a sewing basket of rice straw (the one she still uses) and equipped it, spending his own pocket money. And Wei-ling, helped by her younger brother, made Tai-chun a boat to sail on the shallow pond.

After that, of course, Tai-chun was too old to play with girls. He lived on the male side of his homestead. He had a tutor who was gruff with him if he even so much as mentioned them. The tutor punished such idleness by obliging him to commit to memory pages from Confucius's books, to cleanse his mind.

Naturally Wei-ling also was no longer permitted the license of a child. Promoted to the Springtime Bower, she was chaperoned in maidenly seclusion. While kept from man, yet, as marriage was to be her career, her educators seldom permitted her thoughts to stray away from man or the arts by which to please him.

The clans of Lin and Pien are both exceedingly cautious. Both received invitations to betrothal from other clans as the years passed. Neither

entirely rebuffed any one of these queries. Then, at New Year 1919, the House of Lin included a pair of embroidered pockets in the usual friendly gifts to the House of Pien. One pocket held a red card on which Tai-chun's name, birth hour, day, moon, and year were brushed in gold. The other was empty. The House of Pien returned the empty pocket filled with a red card on which were brushed Wei-ling's name, birth hour, day, moon, and year.

At the Dragon, the Harvest, and the New Year Festivals for three years after this, the House of Lin sent sweetmeats and flowers to Wei-ling. On the third Dragon Festival they included a pink flowered silk of the shade used only by a bride, thus indicating that they but waited for her to name the day to make everything ready to receive her. She announced the day by sending the wife of the Lin Family Elder a square of the bride's silk on which she had painted seven chrysanthemums, thus indicating the seventh day of the Chrysanthemum Moon as her choice.

Phœnix-and-dragon cakes were then baked for the betrothed groom, in addition to those sent to the promised bride. Accompanied only by Camelback to carry the red kneeling mat, Tai-chun called in each homestead within visiting distance and gave his wedding invitation to the Elder and his wife. Others were sent by post.

Horn moon lanterns (symbolic of marriage, because each month the pale lady Moon throws herself into the embrace of her lover the radiant Sun, leaving him only when he has kindled new light in her) were hung outside the To and From the World Gate and were lit each sunset. Red and gold scrolls below them announced that the great-granddaughter of Pien was soon coming to complete the House of Exile by union with the great-grandnephew of Lin.

The family portraits, even the most ancient and fragile, were unrolled and hung in the halls. Silk hangings, awnings, banners, carpets, and candelabra were arranged with even more elaborateness than for Mai-da's marriage. A daughter's marriage holds the sadness of departure, but a son's marriage holds only the joy of arrival.

The family shared rooms, so that, in addition to the usual guest courts, there were three courts in the men's quarters and three in the women's vacated. These were prepared for 'sleeping guests,' some of whom began to arrive ten days before the date. Food in abundance was ready for them.

They also all brought hampers of cooked meats, cakes, and fruit. There was so much that even the children rose from the tables replete after each meal. Trays were heaped with rich dishes for all the needy who knocked at the Gate of Compassion.

Gifts were displayed at one end of the Hall of Family Gathering. There were fans, furs, gown-lengths of brocade and heavy washing silk, and jeweled coat buttons; books, furniture, bed quilts, pillows, tapestries, rugs, porcelain, mirrors; money in the form of gold and silver bars; ducks, geese, turkeys, and goats, which were taken to the stable; rice, barley, wheat, millet, corn, rose trees, and a canoe. Each gift was accompanied by a large red card brushed with the name of the donor and the gift.

The magnificent Lin bride's chair, for which the gold lacquer was made at Foochow and whose tapestry occupied the wives of Lin ten years, is of such workmanship that two centuries of use have but enriched its elegance. At dawn on the marriage eve, the groom knelt in the circle of his ancestral tablets, on the hearth of his homestead, and before his Elders. In each place he told that he intended now to take the

bride's chair to a worthy maid. Firecrackers were set off as he departed. He was attended by musicians, banner bearers, and his aunt. She carried the cloak and the veil for the bride. The House of Pien is three villages up the canal. Giant crackers, exploded at the wharf, were heard in the Lin homestead as Tai-chun embarked with his escort in four rowboats.

The bride's house in the Lin homestead was waiting when the Pien servants came with her dowry at midday. The Lin Elder's wife, as Lady of First Authority, superintended the placing of her tulipwood bed. Half a dozen wives assisted in the arranging of things. The rosewood chest, carved with one hundred laughing chubby babies, which by custom contains the bedding the bride desires to use on her marriage night, was opened and unpacked. The pink silk bed curtains were hung under the four-posted canopy. The mattress was spread. Coverlets of peach blossom, primrose, and heliotrope were put in place. The copper 'baby's first bath basin' was found to need no polishing. It was turned upside down to be used as a table on which to serve the bride and groom's nuptial supper.

The lacquer chest, holding the bride's garments for the festivities, was put against one wall. The table, with its dwarf pine tree, symbol of long life, and the tapers of red wax, was placed against the opposite wall with a straight-back chair on either side of it. 'Our Lady of Five Sons and Two Daughters,' a lovely tinted ivory figure with a sweet Madonna face, was unwound from her wrappings and stood in her niche above the bed.

VI

The groom returned next day, an hour before the arrival of his bride, and in ample time to dress. The Family Elder bade her procession welcome at the To and From the World Gate. The Lin women took the carrying poles from the servants and lifted the bride's chair in, over the apple of peace. The seals were broken and she descended. She placed an apple, pledge of peace, beside the string of cash, pledge of fortune, that lay on a grain measure in the centre of the court.

Her husband welcomed her by offering her refreshment after her journey from the 'cup of the perfect circle,' which necessitated the lifting of her veil before they could share the wine. Then he led her to kneel with him in the Hall of Ancestors, at his Homestead Hearth, and before his Elders, which observance is a symbol that henceforth they are one in rights and responsibilities, as though she had been born in his clan.

Then the Lin family stood at the end of their Hall of Dignity to receive the congratulations of their guests. To the Elders each guest said, 'May you soon have another descendant on your knee.' To the groom's parents, 'May you embrace grandchildren and great-grandchildren.' To the bride and groom, 'May you live together five generations.' To all other Lins, 'Good! Good! Good!'

The women's feast was served that evening in the Court of the Favorite Eaves of Nesting Swallows, the men's feast in the Court of the Happy Waterfall. The groom passed from man to man, pouring wine and pressing some special dish on each. The bride passed from woman to woman, pouring wine and pressing some special dish on each. Little girl children sat at table with the women, and little boys with the men. The courtesy to them was identical with that shown to their elders.

When the wedding couple had accomplished 'wine and food politeness,'

they went to the bride's house, where their supper had been placed on the upturned copper basin. The bride and groom shared the 'son and daughter dumplings,' the 'bread of long life,' and the 'wine of sympathy.' While they ate, the Family Elder and his wife sat together on the bench under the cherry tree, outside the bride's window, and sang the 'Mating Song.' This song may be sung only by a man and a woman who have loved each other for more than five decades. . . .

The bride's mother came to breakfast. The sulky chrysanthemums had refused to bloom earlier, despite all coaxing, but they opened their silken petals that morning to welcome the young wife. She was dressed in that stiff silk named by its weavers 'roses at dawn.' Seamstresses had fashioned it into bell-legged trousers and a collarless but very graceful short coat. It had been embroidered with the flowers of every season in threads so fine that they appeared to be painted on. Her husband's gift, a sapphire like a bit of the China sky at night, sparkled as she patted her anxious parent reassuringly before she sat down.

VII

An Englishman in the Chinese Government Service, whom I had met on the *Empress of Asia* when I went home for a brief visit, was given my China address during his stay in America. In the Peony Moon, he returned to China a fortnight before the expiration of his 'leave,' and sent his sister-in-law to call upon me. She is nice. I liked her at first meeting.

The second time that she came to see me he came with her. He said that he had been appointed to Nanking. Mai-da had accompanied her husband to Nanking three months previously. The residence the government provided him was just five minutes' walk from the residence provided for Mai-da's husband. Aside from giving me this information, the rest of the time of the call was taken up with telling me gravely that I made a mistake in staying on in China.

Twice in the Dragon Moon he kindly took the trouble to explain to me that I ought not to do what I was doing. He came three times in the Lotus Moon. On the fifth day of the Harvest Moon he asked me in marriage.

He was found suitable, on investigation, by both the Chinese and the American people who had concern for me. This was well. It made everything much more pleasant.

I was most confusedly in love. I dreaded speaking about it, if he asked me. But he did n't ask. From the first meeting, he had distracted my mind. Even though I resolved not to think of him, his face would keep appearing between me and a book I tried to read, or his voice would suddenly sound instead of the words I tried to write on a page. This still happens even now. I found love annoying and uncomfortable, like fetters, until I got used to it.

During the weeks that my betrothed's intent to marry me was publicly posted at his country's consulate, it was also read out each Sunday morning in the Church of England: 'If any of you know cause or just impediment why these two persons should not be joined together in holy matrimony, ye are to declare it.'

No one declared anything, so, after the ten o'clock service at the British Consulate, I changed my dress and then was married at twelve o'clock in the Church of England. This very nearly did not happen. Shortly before the service was to begin, the aged Dean of the Cathedral comprehended that I was a Quaker and that, if such was true, I had never been baptized.

I had n't. Neither had any of my progenitors within my memory. The Dean explained that marriage is a Christian sacrament which he considered it wrong to administer to one who had not been christened. The Quakers present from Philadelphia were drawn into the matter. Joseph Swain said that words spoken over water did not make it holy, nor could the touch of such water make one more Christian. The aged Dean had a long answer to that. It began to seem to me that my marriage was not to be. Then it flashed into my mind that all water which falls from heaven is holy, and words spoken over it could not change it. I mentioned this quietly to one of my Quaker relatives, an elderly woman whose judgment I have always found sound. She agreed, and quietly told the others.

My betrothed, the Dean, and I went into a side chapel. The Dean asked me some questions. I answered them. He was really a very kindly man. My answers seemed to comfort him. I asked him some questions. I found him not unlike a Quaker. He sprinkled some water on my head. My husband-to-be was written in a book as my godfather.

Previous to my own wedding, I had never seen a wedding other than Quaker and Chinese weddings. Neither had I ever been in a place built for worship other than Chinese temples and Quaker meetinghouses. The Cathedral, where I was married, has stained-glass windows depicting scenes from the Bible in color. There were white flowers, tall lighted candles, and a sonorous organ on which one of my husband's friends played music that bade one yield obedience to supernatural powers.

We go to Quaker meetings with or without hats as we choose. It is the same in Chinese temples. But a woman has to have her head covered to enter here. I had a matron of honor to attend me and prompt me when to walk to the music, when to kneel, and when to rise. She had covered me with a lovely filmy white veil of handmade lace, fashioned it into a cap with a wreath of orange blossoms, and spread it over my white dress so that it trailed far behind. I had also something old, something blue, and something new.

The aged Dean did not conduct the service. A young clergyman, surpliced in white, possessed of the most lyrical voice I have ever heard, read it from the church prayer book in cadenced solemnity. Hearing this marriage sacrament for the first time, I was surprised at it. During one part I was panicky and thought: 'What am I doing here?' I had regret that I had trusted so naïvely. I observed the solemn man beside me. I felt as though some awful trap were closing around me. As word followed word, I had a desire to get away quickly. It was late autumn, but the day was warm. A window had been opened. When I turned from the altar I faced this window.

A wren sat on the inside sill. She was arranging her feathers. The sight of the little bird sitting inside the Cathedral casually preening herself restored me. Through ten happy years I have been grateful for her sweet naturalness.

I turned again to the altar. Although Quakers are not wedded with rings, I reassured the startled young clergyman by putting back on the fourth finger of my left hand the ring I had pulled off, and knelt again beside my quietly waiting husband.

(*The End*)

IN HOSPITAL

BY LAURENCE BINYON

I

Nothing of itself is in the still'd mind, only
A still submission to each exterior image,
Still as a pool, accepting trees and sky —

Not a drifted leaf, no, not a breath disturbing
That candid mirror, as if a single substance
With shape and color enclosed in its own perfection —

When, lost in the bloom of the morning's white silence,
Drowsily drowsing eyes, empty of thought,
Accept the blank breadth of the opposite wall.

Lying in my bed, motionless, hardly emerged
From clouds of sleep, — a solitary cloud
Is not more vague in the chartless blue of ether

Than I, with unapportioned and unadjusted
Senses that put off trouble of understanding,
Placeless, a tranced submission, a still surrender.

The early light brims over the filled silence.
Memory stirs not a wave or a shadow within me.
Only the wall is the world; there stops my sight.

II

If he should bend his bow, that great archer
There before me, if tautened and all erect
Slowly he should draw the arrow back to his ear,

Suddenly I should see the curve of his tense body
Alter, and O at the leap of the sighted arrow
The arms descend, shoulder and hip relax.

But hidden is his face, hidden the bow behind him.
I see the square of the buckle that clasps embossed
The belt girding the slenderness of his loins,

The smooth and idle energy of his arms;
And under the mould of breast and flank I feel
The invisible veins and warm blood pulsing through them.

But why is his face hidden? And why does my heart
Beat with a fear that he may be all disclosed
Terrible in calm, terrible in beauty and power?

For his eyes must surely be filled with the far mountains,
Rivers and great plains be his eyes' possession;
And full in the centre of his concentred vision

Stands his victim, he who is soon to be stricken,
Soon to fall, with the arrow pouncing upon him,
The arrow that carries the light and scorn of his eyes.

Why do you hide your face, glorious Archer?
If I could see you, then though the arrow pierced me
Gazing upon you, it were a glory to fall.

Will you at last, seizing the bow, bend it?
Now, as I gaze? A thrilling of fear rushes
Blind in my veins: fear? Is it fear, or hope?

As if all my gaze were fixt on a drop of water
Suspended, about to fall and still not falling,
A liquid jewel of slowly increasing splendor

As the rain retreats and the shadow of cloud is lifted
And all light comes to enclose itself in the circle
Of a single drop, so is this suspended moment.

III

The stillness moves. Tripping of feet; shadows;
Voices. The hospital wakes to its ritual round.
The moment breaks; the drop, the bright drop falls.

A sponge has prest its coldness over my spirit.
Shape and color abandon their apparition,
Glide, subside, a glimmering unrecovered.

And another mind returns with the day's returning,
Weaving its soft invisible meshes around me.
This is the daylight, bald on the plain wall.

Cracks in the paint, a trickle of random lines,
A trailing scrawl that a child might trace with a stick
As he runs idly about the ebb-tide sands —

Is it out of these I supposed a towering image
There on the blankness? Are you gone, my Archer,
You who were living more than the millions waking?

No, you are there still! It was I released you
Out of the secret world wherein you are hidden.
You are there, there; and the arrow is flying, flying. . . .

And yet patient, as if nothing were endangered,
We do small things and keep the little commandments, —
We and our doings a scribble upon the wall.

THE LOST ART OF PLAY

BY EARNEST ELMO CALKINS

I

THIS country is destined to cope with the problems of leisure on a scale never before experienced. No matter what we think of technocracy and its alarming conclusions, it is obvious that the necessary work of the world can now be done in comparatively few working hours. This conclusion is inescapable, although the figures of the technocrats have now been scaled down to something like scientific accuracy and show no such crisis as its propounders would have us believe. But, even in a time of prosperity, production was increasing faster than jobs for displaced workers. After the exaggerated figures and the melancholy interpretations are discounted, it is still evident that technological unemployment has been a bigger factor in the depression than was at first suspected; so, even when we settle the major problem of a job (or at least an income) for every breadwinner, the problem of greatly increased leisure will remain with us.

The increase of leisure is not a new thing. It began fifty years ago when working hours and waking hours were almost identical, and no one had yet heard of technological unemployment. Stores were open from seven in the morning until nine at night, and later on Saturdays. Professional men got to their offices at seven-thirty and remained until six. As a young advertising man I was rebuked by the president of one of the large manufacturing companies of the Middle West because I did not reach my office until eight o'clock. He had been waiting half an hour. He was at his office, he said, every morning at seven, summer and winter. Each successive generation has snipped off an hour or so.

My first job, in 1885, was from six-thirty to six-thirty (with one hour off at noon for dinner) on week days, and one hour less on Saturdays — 65 hours a week. I was the 'devil,' and came earlier and worked later than the journeyman printers, but even they put in 59 hours, as did I as soon as I graduated to a 'case.' In some occupations the hours were longer. After I had walked home, washed up, and eaten my supper, it was time to go to bed, especially in view of the early rising which this schedule imposed. Not much thought was given to leisure then, but, in the fifty years since, the average working time has steadily decreased. Not only the machine, but more efficient methods, contributed, and behind this was the steady, insistent demand for shorter hours. The eight-hour workday, the Saturday-afternoon holiday, the two weeks' vacation, and daylight saving brought daytime leisure to millions. The motor car, moving pictures, radio, and athletic sports took up the slack. Machines that created the leisure produced the apparatus for enjoying it.

The depression has added a larger number of people with more leisure

than they know how to occupy. The effect has been apparent in every field that supplies entertainment or recreation. Libraries have been thronged; playgrounds and community centres are crowded; correspondence courses, adult schools, and other methods of self-improvement available at little or no cost are patronized as never before. The proprietors of amusement parks in convention assembled the last month of the old year heard their president predict a bigger and better year for merry-go-rounds, scenic railways, and Ferris wheels. The report of the Westchester Park Association contained the gratifying information that the work is self-supporting, the income from concessions and recreations for which a fee is charged, such as public golf links and bathhouses, showing a net profit over the costs of operation. The National Recreation Association, the body that guides the movement toward community centres and playgrounds, finds the public turning to these amusements in greater numbers. Already, before the economic problem is solved, the demand for recreation has reached impressive proportions, and is steadily increasing.

Just how much of our time will be needed to do the work of supplying every consumer with what he needs has not been and cannot be worked out until we have first solved that delicate problem of balance between machine production and human consumption, but the disproportion between them is bound to increase. Speaking to the toy manufacturers recently, Paul T. Cherington said: —

'With labor leaders threatening to use force to get a 30-hour work week, you have something real to think about. There are 112 waking hours in a week of 7 days of 16 hours each. Subtracting these 30 hours spent in gainful labor would leave 82 hours. Allow 21 hours for meals, and there are left 61 hours of waking time with which 45,000,000 working people are to do as they please. They will sorely need a technique for utilizing leisure. That will be more play time than we had in our childhood. You as toy manufacturers will find your best abilities called on to provide the equipment by which the play technique can be developed and exercised. It will take something more absorbing than ordinary games to keep 45,000,000 adults happy for 3172 hours a year each. They will need toys to teach them how to play, and playing equipment to enable them to do it as adults.'

The grown-up who takes his pleasures and himself seriously may be affronted to hear his apparatus of sport and recreation characterized as toys. There is an anecdote which may give him another point of view. A maid putting a room to rights came upon the chessboard still set up for an unfinished game, and asked her mistress, 'Shall I put the master's little playthings away, or will he be using them?'

II

Millions of people, presumably, are going to have in the near future, whether they want it or not, more time off than they ever dreamed of. An entire nation which has never learned to play has been presented with the great gift of leisure. Our playing is, for the most part, done by proxy. We make paid entertainers rich by our inexperience in amusing ourselves. 'Since the war,' says Professor Cherington, 'American expenditure on the various forms of recreation has more than doubled. The *Business Week* estimated that expenditures for recreation in 1919 were $1,700,000,000. In 1927 they were over $4,000,000,000, and in 1929 they were $5,200,000,000, and even in 1930 they were still over $4,000,000,000.'

But vicarious amusements are not going to suffice to fill the spare hours which the future will bring. We must do better than that. At the rate that labor-saving machinery is being developed, even Mr. Green's 30-hour week may be outmoded. True, his firm demand in the interest of organized labor was more concerned with distributing what employment still exists than in increasing the leisure of workers, but the outcome will be the same in any case. We must consider, therefore, what we are going to do with so much spare time. We have not been trained for it, and all our traditions are against it. We do not, as a people, care for those quieter and simpler amusements which are easily and cheaply available, which do so much for the spirit — walking, observing, studying, learning, gardening, practising a craft, engaging in community activities, making the most of human companionship. It is an encouraging sign that many of the unemployed have turned to self-improvement, but these are a small fraction of the army, and their studies are mainly devoted to improving their earning capacity rather than to developing their qualities as well-rounded human beings.

Play for grown-ups is just beginning to figure in the scheme of things. Before the days of leisure it was a small problem for adults. The craving for amusement and recreation was checked by the fact that it was a full-time job to earn a living. The century-old houses which we modernize for our summer homes had no porches, no outdoor sitting rooms. Their occupants had no time to sit down and admire the scenery. Play was then the heritage only of children, who, when they grew up, put away childish things for the serious business of life. But now we have to consider what use might profitably be made of leisure by some fifty million adults with at least nineteen solid weeks a year free from all duties, who will finish their short workday with abundant energy, and must find a safe, sane, satisfying outlet for that energy if their new-found leisure is not to become a menace.

These people now turn naturally to popular organized amusements which are destitute of the spirit of play. They must acquire a new conception of play, one that demands active participation instead of passive acceptance. Radio, movies, athletic spectacles, will all have a large place, but they will no longer suffice for a grown-up, healthy population. There must be something to make demands upon them physically and mentally, to develop and express them, and to give exercise to invention and imagination. Since play begins in childhood and is the natural expression of the young, when not stifled by too many predigested toys, it is well to look at the playthings of children today to see what they promise for a future that will offer so many opportunities.

III

Possibly the art of play is lost in childhood. I wonder if children play to-day as they did when I was a boy. A glance at contemporary toys convinces me that little is left for a child to do. Just the other day I saw a marvelous miniature railroad train — indeed, the complete rolling stock of a system, with engines both electric and steam, cars both passenger and freight, day coaches, Pullmans, baggage cars, freight cars, gondolas, and tanks, faithful in detail and accurately reproduced to scale — designed for boys whose parents are able to pay five hundred dollars for a toy. When a modern boy is confronted with a plaything so complete and so realistic, I wonder what he does with it. Does he get a tithe of the

fun out of it that I did sixty years ago from a string of cars of oblong pasteboard box covers mounted on empty spools?

The gap between my primitive train and the real thing was the measure of my amusement; I had to fill the gap with imagination. Modern toys seem to overshoot the mark they aim at. They leave nothing for the child to do. Child psychology is peculiar in these matters; it goes unerringly to the heart of the thing. The child is honest in his preferences; he cares nothing for cost, and he knows what he likes; he selects the toys that still have some play left in them. Who has n't seen a little girl pass up dolls with real hair, eyes that open and shut, and a wardrobe like a movie star, for some forlorn, shapeless rag baby?

On the last Christmas of the pre-slump era, I spent the day with a brother at a family gathering where there were many of the third generation, including three grandsons. The child who was host brought out his toys for his cousins to play with — a great box of corrugated packing board filled with realistic models of motor cars, trucks, railroad trains, and airplanes, of the sort that fascinates grown-ups more than children. The boys examined the toys with interest, but soon I noticed that they were all piled in the corner of the room, and the boys were playing with the pasteboard box. They played with it all the afternoon, and the toys never got another look. They were too complete, too finished. There are a lot of things you can do with a big pasteboard box and a little imagination.

Why has no one thought of asking children what toys they prefer? That is the approved method in other fields. Research is used to test out and improve all sorts of products, from vegetable shortenings to free wheeling in motor cars, but so far as I know no toy maker has made a study of child play habits to learn what toys have the most play in them. This should be a research directed at the ultimate consumer, not the grown-up intermediary. Presents for children are selected by parents and other adult relatives, and represent what they think children like. Those toys presumably bought for children but monopolized by the grown-ups have become a standing joke. Perhaps it is something more than a joke.

IV

Some worthy folks gathered together at the New York Museum, the week before Christmas, an exhibition of toys of other days. Most of these dated from the sixties, about the time of my own childhood, but they did not represent to any great degree the toys I knew best. The very fact of their preservation showed that they were not played with, that they were far too fine and good for childhood nature's daily food. They were, in fact, antiques of considerable virtuosity, examples of skilled craftsmanship, preserved rather than used. Toys which stimulate the qualities of real play are not likely to survive.

I missed among this collection the simpler and more inspiring playthings of my childhood. Here were paper dolls, but they were a special hand-painted set — the work, no doubt, of some gifted mother, brought out to show the minister or Aunt Marion and then put away on the whatnot in the parlor, but not played with. I should have liked to see a sheet of paper soldiers, a toy drum, a monkey on a stick, a cat's cradle, a buzzer. This last was a round disk of tin with holes in the centre, through which a string was passed; when made to revolve rapidly by the twisting and untwisting of the string, it emitted a faint

hum, the pitch of which could be changed by cutting notches in the disk. There was but one small bag of marbles, which properly should have been represented by a complete set — commies, clay of all colors (ten for a cent), chinas (two for a cent), potteries, glassies, agates (one cent), and carnelians, usually reserved for taws by affluent sportsmen (five and ten cents).

It was significant that toys for girls showed greater powers of survival. There were many dolls of the more elegant class, with complete wardrobes in contemporary styles, even to gloves, shoes, and stays; there were beds that were fully equipped, sets of furniture, trunks, and a miniature practicable cookstove. But I missed the dolls we knew as 'one-cent dolls,' 'five-cent dolls,' and 'ten-cent dolls.' The one-cent dolls, about 1½ inches tall, had stiff bodies of china, but the five-and-ten variety had flexible cloth bodies with china heads, hands, and feet. I should have liked to see a specimen of that lethal weapon, the rubber gun (a crotch with two rubber bands and a leather tab for the missile), and a whistle made from a willow wand. There should have been quantities of building blocks in various geometrical shapes, one of the most satisfying toys ever devised.

The supreme advantage of the toys of the past was their limitations. Even this selection at the New York Museum lacked the almost ferocious realism and efficiency and completeness of the playthings which fill the windows of modern toy emporiums. Ours were largely homemade, by grown-ups sometimes, but often by the child. They were crude, primitive, and quaint, lacking the slickness and technological completeness of modern machine-made toys. Ingenuity, invention, resourcefulness, and imagination were required, not only to make them, but to play with them. Toys are not a means to an end; they are not tools. Efficiency, therefore, is a drawback rather than an advantage.

Bought toys were mostly of European origin, largely handmade products of German and Swiss craftsmen, and they reflected, of course, the life of the country of origin. The dolls were European types in European dress; the animals those common to European barnyards — asses and oxen, so familiar to the Bavarian peasant, but rarely seen by prairie-bred children. The houses were made of their stone instead of our wood. The building blocks were adapted to the construction of German or Swiss buildings. From them emanated an atmosphere which we, as children, thought to be the peculiar mark of toys, though it was, of course, simply the reflection of their European origin. To-day toys are replicas of the life the child sees around him. Ninety per cent are now made in this country. There may be some educational value in this, though there is a loss of charm and picturesqueness; but the question is: Has not something of the spirit of play been sacrificed in making toys so sophisticated?

V

Let me use my own childhood as a temporary laboratory. Most of our playthings were handmade. When Mother's tired fingers dropped a plate, the fragments became a set of dishes on which we partook of Barmecide repasts. When the local dry-goods store delivered a drayload of packing cases to be later chopped up into kindling, we made houses of several rooms, each room a box, and built a small village which lasted until the hatchet fell. With a piece of chalk and a handful of beans, grains, and nuts, we laid out a farm on the attic floor, drawing the

ground plan with chalk — here the house, there the barn, cowsheds, and fields — and stocking the place with beans for horses and cattle. There was a black-and-white bean that made admirable Holsteins. Or we set up circuses, with hazelnuts for deer, peanuts for camels, 'niggertoes' for rhinoceri, and butternuts with the bark on for elephants. There was a set of chessmen, never used for its ancient and honorable purpose, out of which we created ceremonies and pageants, the unlikeness of the pieces to what we pretended they were giving the games their charm.

The most useful 'boughten' toy appears to have been building blocks, originally those oblongs and cubes with 'A a,' 'B b' on them. They rapidly became more complex and versatile, until they culminated in the 'erector' outfits of to-day. Even in their primitive form they were a source of unending amusement. Their combinations were infinite, and developed our ingenuity amazingly. There was a variety known as Anchor, made of clay, their weight adding to the stability of the structures built of them, with arches and keyed shapes and rounded pillars, the possibilities of which seemed inexhaustible. Do the complete and expensive toys of to-day offer as much?

Shrewd parents got home tasks done by disguising them as games. I did a lot of weeding when I was a boy by pretending I was George Washington and the weeds were Hessians. I pinned up my straw broad-brim into a cocked hat and wore a belt with a wooden sword. The big burdock in the onion bed was General Burgoyne. It was useless for him to surrender. He died with his cohorts.

There is more play in riding a stick than in a lifelike mechanical horse. Children are able to evolve complete games with only a few anomalous objects as counters, to which they assign names and functions of their own. This creative faculty is precious, and should be encouraged. Toys and playthings too complete and realistic stifle it, besides adding to cost without corresponding advantages.

VI

The child is father of the man; as the twig is bent the tree is inclined — so runs a whole chapter of proverbial philosophy. Only after one has lived a considerable portion of his life does the truth of such sayings come home with full force. I realize that much of my ability to get the most out of life in the way of amusement, occupation, entertainment, is the direct product of learning to play as a boy. My present interests are largely the lengthened shadow of my boyhood hobbies. Having been deaf most of my life, I have been driven, more than most normal persons, to find my amusements within myself. Even so, I am merely a little more complete example of the resources of intelligent intellectual and physical amusement which are stored up in most human beings.

I find in myself the same curiosities and satisfactions which I remember experiencing as a boy, — the pleasure of making, of doing things with my hands, with tools, with pen and pencil and brush, — and in them I find my primary escape. I realize now how deep were the impressions made in childhood, and wonder whether this is sufficiently considered by those who design toys and playthings. No one seems to ask whether they are of the sort which will create that proper spirit of play which is going to be so necessary for adults in the greater leisure that impends. Children are in danger of losing all that knack of

using their faculties for amusement, that handiness, adaptability, resourcefulness. These are the qualities which lend color to life, the qualities which once made *Robinson Crusoe* a best seller.

There is some contemporary realization of this. There are play schools where children are taught along the lines of their interest, where no great divide exists between play and work; but such institutions are few and small, available only to the well-to-do. Such methods have not penetrated the public schols, though the latter have advanced greatly since my day, when the processes of education were painful and any effort to make school interesting was looked upon with suspicion. To-day we are just beginning to realize what an ideal approach to a child's mind is afforded by the painless method of teaching by play.

The Boy Scout movement is intended to teach and encourage proficiency in various crafts and skills that are in danger of disappearing in our present-day civilization. There are groups of boys interested in miniature-yacht racing and model-airplane flying, though the yachts and planes are too frequently bought rather than made. An important contribution toward the development of craftsmanship among boys has been made in the last two years by the Fisher Body Corporation, which deserves for its efforts more commendation than it has obtained. This is the offer of valuable prizes to boys from thirteen to nineteen who complete miniature models of Napoleon's coach. I had supposed that this was a publicity stunt pure and simple, but the company has actually made little capital out of it, preferring, perhaps wisely, to let it advertise itself.

Briefly, the awards, which total $30,000, are led by four grand prizes of full courses in any technical school the winner selects, with smaller state prizes and awards for excellence in particular phases of the work. The contestants are supplied with complete working plans to scale, and the problem is one that would tax the patience, skill, and taste of an experienced model maker. It requires exactness to fractions of an inch, intelligence in reading plans and setting off measurements, exceptional skill in handling wood, metal, cloth, leather, glass, and paint. Over 400,000 boys have entered the two contests, and over 2000 completed coaches were submitted to the judges last year. Herr Walther Leuschner, the German craftsman who made the pattern coach and drew the plans, admits that at least one of these youngsters equaled his own master model.

To complete such a coach involves wood carving and turning, joinery, pattern making, metal casting, gluing, soldering, and brazing, the use of taps and dies, needlework and upholstery, leather working, painting, and decorating. No boy can undertake the task without learning much, and no boy can finish among the winners without having acquired skills that will be useful all his life — not the least of which are patience and thoroughness, and, particularly, the satisfaction that comes from doing something extremely well.

VII

Play is active. All the connotations of the word suggest the idea of movement. The word 'amuse' might be analyzed etymologically as signifying 'away from musing,' coming out of one's self. Even stronger in this sense is the word 'distract,' to draw away, or 'divert,' to turn away. Play is an alternative for those lazy entertainments which find us idle and leave us passive, since it gives us something we can do or make to exercise our faculties and

cause us to experience that glorious sense of achievement.

Play may be either mental or physical, but the best form is that which is both, which exercises mind and body, a game that demands brain and brawn, a walk heightened by understanding interest in the surroundings, scenery, bird life, or growing things, in topography or geology. Walking is a stimulus to the mind, and the mind should have something to work on. Play divides also into social and solitary kinds. I am more proficient in the solitary kinds because my deafness is a bar to social intercourse. But the advantages of self-starting amusements should not be ignored by even the keenest-eared and most socially disposed. They make one independent and perhaps bring the most satisfying reward. They divide roughly into study, craft, and collecting, though each borrows something from the other two. Social amusements range all the way from games to intelligent participation in community activities.

High on the list of activities which may be pursued as private hobbies but which shower their benefits on the public is the ancient art of gardening. Like Portia's famous quality of mercy, it blesses both gardener and beholder. A love of gardens and a bit of ground upon which to lavish that affection are a fortunate equipment. For not only is gardening full of rewards and surprises for the gardener, but, since a community is only a number of plots, each under the control of a different individual, the collective result of numerous gardens is a beautiful community, and ultimately a beautiful country. No one can care for a home place, and endeavor to make it æsthetically pleasing, and remain indifferent to the condition of his neighbors' yards. Thus community spirit is developed by emulation.

Gardening is a combination of physical and mental effort, that combination of mind and muscle which gives to any effort its interest. There is the joy of digging in the earth with the sun on one's back, which is so satisfying, and the study of flowers, which can be carried as far and made as special as one pleases. Its inevitable progress is to landscape next, developing an interest in the country which belongs to all, streets, parks, and public buildings. If we loved gardening as universally as the Swiss or the English, the country would be transformed, for there would be developed a public opinion to influence public projects, highways, reservations, the great heritage of scenery, and save them from the vulgarization and destruction that now threaten them. Professionally our gardens are unsurpassed. An English visitor recently bore testimony to that fact. But it is like our golf or tennis. A few play well enough to beat the best English, but the average is much lower here than there. Nearly every country cottage yard in England is ablaze with color of homely old-fashioned flowers, and gardening fills a large place in the lives of many people.

It is inevitable that many in this new era of daylight playtime will turn to gardening, but there is need of a popularizer, something that will make the interest as keen as it now is in contract bridge.

The wise use of leisure may easily be an important, perhaps the most important influence on the future course of our civilization. People express themselves more frankly in their play than in their work. When they are free they turn naturally to that which they most want to do. If these diversions are of the kind that develops the complete man, mentally, socially, and physically, they will profoundly influence the course of human events, and

have economic reverberations as well. Already amusement is a big business, though unfortunately it has developed thus far more largely along the 'escape' side than the auto-creative. It offers forgetfulness of dreary tasks rather than the inspiration of self-expression.

But all forms of recreation, even those followed by devotees at least cost, when sufficiently popular and widespread, create demands that must be supplied — not merely what Professor Cherington calls 'adult toys,' but paths for pedestrians, community playgrounds, and other public works. It is easily possible that the millions freed by short working hours will create entirely new consumption of goods, products, and services to supply the needs of diversion. It is a new version of writing a nation's songs rather than making its laws.

Professor Cherington was talking to toy makers when he advised the creation of more grown-up playthings, and these will surely come. Trust American enterprise to see to that. But what are most sorely needed and should be given the most earnest thought are less artificial occupations, those things which develop the spirit, satisfy the whole being, call forth one's powers, capacity for study or research, skill, proficiency — a new language, a musical instrument, interpretative dancing, not in a showy sense, as accomplishments, but for one's own satisfaction.

Few people can do common everyday things well. How many are there who can tie a knot? Most still use the granny knot, when what sailors call a square knot is easy to tie, is unslippable, and can be untied as easily as tied. The other day I noticed a tennis net at a small hotel held by guy ropes the loops of which had been neatly spliced. I suspected a sailor and found him in the handy man of the place, formerly able seaman on a Danish bark. Why should not more of us know how to make a splice, or a hitch, or a tackle? Why do we not learn the simple laws of mechanics that apply to the things around us, which we use daily? It would reduce the friction of living if we were all handier, and there is a certain indefinable satisfaction in using one's hands and wits aptly.

It would be futile to catalogue all the ways in which the human spirit expresses itself in those hours which are gloriously its own. A glance at the windows of any sporting-goods store suggests that there are at least a thousand games and sports played with apparatus, and this is but one and not perhaps the highest department of human diversion. While it does take skill and brains to play many games (though it denotes something, I am not sure what, that so many games are conditioned by the element of chance), games and sports do not as a rule develop the creative instinct which is the divinest impulse in our natures. But it will be a real advance if any large number of people can be taught or persuaded to play in any capacity. That is the first step.

Perhaps this is the opportunity of the National Recreation Association. It is organized around the idea of affording facilities for community amusement. It is a non-profit body, privately supported, which acts as leader and guide to local groups desiring to create community houses, public playgrounds, and other nuclei of recreation. It is significant of the spirit in which it takes its work that this Association inspired and sponsored the visit to this country of Dr. L. P. Jacks, whose lectures on recreation through education or vice versa set up an admirable programme for the Association that backed him.

RETROSPECT

The Innocent Eye

BY HERBERT READ

I

THE English farm on which I spent my earliest years was a self-contained little world; only occasionally did we make excursions to regions beyond its boundaries. Once a year, perhaps in early autumn, we went with wagons to some woods eight or nine miles away, on the edge of the Moors. There we had the right to fell a certain amount of timber, and to bring it away on our wagons. It was a long day's expedition, and an immense adventure when we were allowed to go. We took our food with us and picnicked among the resinous chips and stripped bark.

This is the only expedition I remember taking from the farm. My wider explorations were done from other bases. Three or four times, in periods of illness or when, I now suppose, a brother or sister was expected, I went to stay with relations for a few weeks. My mother was the youngest daughter in a family of nine, so we were richly provided with aunts. One of these, a widow, lived with her two sons and our grandfather in a cottage at Helmsley, and there I stayed on at least two occasions.

Helmsley was six miles to the west. The road passed through Harome, a hamlet of white thatched cottages, in one of which lived a woman, my mother used to tell us impressively, with twenty-three children. A mile outside Helmsley the road crossed the railway, and then ran in a straight slope into the town. My aunt's cottage was on the right as we entered, by the side of a sawmill. When a saw was working, a high melancholy whine rose above the houses and filled me with a vague dread. This first street, Bondgate, opened into a wide market place, with a market cross and a monument in the middle. On one side the houses were still half-timbered, with overhanging gables; the tower of the church rose above them, scattering a merry peal from its numerous bells. Once a week, on Saturdays, the market place was filled with booths, dense with farmers and their wives. At other times it was a wide deserted space, with perhaps a child or two and a dog at the foot of the cross. Sometimes a cart drawn by bullocks passed slowly across, as if to emphasize an air of almost Eastern sleepiness — such carts being an affectation of the Earl whose park gates were at the end of one of the streets leading out of the market place.

Beyond the market place the castle stood in its green keep, still massive and imposing in spite of its deliberate destruction by the Parliamentarians. Here again was a stage setting for my later romantic notions, but my authentic memory of this time associates it only with a tennis tournament in which

my father took part, and I still see the white figures of the players set against the vivid green of the lawn. Sheep grazed in the empty moats, and rooks nested in the ragged turrets.

The castle might have been more impressive but for still more romantic monuments within my reach. Duncombe Park was an amazing wonderland, which we entered but rarely, and always with an awe communicated by our deferential elders. My eyes searched the wide vistas for some limiting hedge, but in vain. We stopped to stroke a newly born deer. Vanbrugh's mansion was something beyond my comprehension, of which I only preserve, as fragments from a strange feast, the white ghosts of marble statues incongruous in this greenery, an orange tree in fruit in the conservatory, and a thatched ice house. Overhanging a steep valley at the end of the park is a famous terrace, with a lawn as smooth as a carpet and a Grecian temple at each end. Down in this valley is the abbey of Rievaulx.

Rievaulx played an important part in the growth of my imagination, but I cannot tell how much of its beauty and romance was absorbed in these years of childhood, how much built on to these memories in later years. It was the farthest western limit of my wanderings, and so lovely then in its solitude and desolation that I think my childish mind, in spite of its overweening objectivity, must have surrendered to its subtle atmosphere. One day, years later, I happened to be there when a new church, built under the shadow of the ruins, was consecrated. A choir had come from York Minster, and sang a *Te Deum* between the ruined arches, their sweet voices echoing strangely under the roof of the sky, their white surplices fluttering in the wind. The tomb of Sir Walter l'Espec, the knight who had founded the abbey and had afterward died as a monk in these cloisters, stood at the end of the chancel. It was not dedicated to any known God, but in a moment of solitude it would serve as an altar to a sense of glory denoted by these ruins and this tomb, and their existence in this solitary place.

Around Rievaulx, and especially through the narrow wooded dales which strike like green rays into the purple darkness of the Moors, I wandered with my cousin, a boy five or six years older than myself. He was a keen collector of birds' eggs, butterflies, and flowers, and had great cunning in the pursuit of these objects. From him I learned how to handle birds' eggs, to empty them through one blow-hole, to pack them in match boxes. We carried catapults and I was taught the honor of the chase: which birds it was legitimate to shoot, how many eggs one could take from a nest, how to rob a nest without spoiling it or discouraging the mother bird. One day in mistake I shot a robin, a crime my cousin made more terrible by promising to keep it a secret from the world.

Sometimes we would be out all day, regardless of meals. We gathered wild gooseberries and stewed them in a tin over a fire of twigs. We ate the tender shoots of sweetbrier, sorrel, and pignuts. I imagine we were severely scolded on our return, but such unpleasantnesses do not endure in the memory. I remember instead the upright figure of my grandfather, white-haired and gentle in his armchair by the kitchen fire, the singing kettle, and the cheeping cry of the crickets. We had only candles to light the cottage in the evening. There was a long low window full of geraniums, a steep wooden staircase with a latched door that clicked loudly. In this house I have always pictured the story of the Three Bears.

Behind it was a long straggling yard,

with outhouses belonging to a builder, and at the end a walled garden where my grandfather grew vegetables and kept bees in straw hives. Here, too, was a shed containing, amongst other junk, some old gas pipes from which I used to try to construct a fountain. I have never met again their pungent metallic smell. Beyond the garden was a lane leading to the cemetery, which with its orderliness and symbolic cypresses was a place very different from the graveyard at Kirkdale. It was usually bright with flowers, and the Sisters of Mercy passed along the graveled paths with their billowing black robes and white-winged caps. I see now that there was something a little foreign in the whole aspect of this town, with its highly ritualistic church, cloudy with sweet incense, where men and women sat in opposite aisles, its tyrannical vicar, its musical bells, its cart oxen, and its air of seeming to live intently on the four sides of a wide open square.

II

Every Sunday the dogcart was yoked up and the whole family climbed into the high seats, my father and mother in front with the youngest of us between them, the rest of us clinging to the precarious back seat. When it rained, an immense gingham umbrella, like the roof of a pagoda, sheltered us all. The big wheels crunched on the gritty roads. The farm retreated from us as we trotted down the northern road to our parish church, five miles away. The road had three points of interest: the Little Beck, the Big Beck, and the peacocks.

The becks excited us because they had no bridges: they widened out into shallow fords through which the horse splashed as if born to this watery element. In spring the becks were often flooded, and sometimes the water stretched for hundreds of feet in a lake of incalculable depth. Then the excitement was intense, but my father must have known the safe limits of the flood. I remember the water coming up to the horse's belly, and our anxiety for the rug, which had a way of hanging below the footboard.

About a mile before we reached the church we passed a small village in the middle of which was a country house known as 'The Hall,' and here, on a high wall, we sometimes saw the peacocks that inhabited the garden beyond. For us they were fabulous birds, and the glory of their plumage the most exotic sight of those days. A mile farther on, the road descended steeply into a narrow valley, and there, in complete isolation, stood our church.

First came a row of sheds and stables, where the horse was unyoked and the trap put under shelter. Then the path led a little lower down to the gate of the churchyard, where in summer a few men would be standing, enjoying the air until the last moment. The bell, or rather the clapper, clanged in the squat tower. The church is of gray stone with a slated roof, and stands out clearly as you approach it against a dark wood of firs. Ancient tombstones lean out of the grassy mounds at all angles. We were taught that it was wicked to walk over a grave, but this graveyard was so ancient and so thickly populated that we had to wander as if in a maze. Either before or after the service we made our way to the family graves, at the east end of the church; but it was not until Mariana died that this duty became a melancholy one, the sight of my mother's tears communicating a wondering sense of woe.

In summer we brought flowers to this grave, and sometimes I was sent to throw away the withered remains of

last week's wreath. At the end of the churchyard there was a low wall, and below this a deep ravine in which the river ran, quite overshadowed by trees. Into this gloomy cavern I threw my handful of wisps, glad to hide my uneasiness in this gesture.

Over the porch of the church is a famous Saxon sundial with an inscription carved on the stone panels at each side which tells you that Orm the son of Gamal bought Saint Gregory's minster when it was all broken down and fallen, and he caused it to be made new from the ground, to Christ and Saint Gregory, in the reign of Edward the King, in the days of Tosti the Earl. Round the dial itself are the words, *This is dæges sol merca æt ilcvmtide* — 'This is the day's sun mark at every tide'; and below the dial you are told, 'Hawarth made me and Brand the priest.'

Inside, the walls are whitewashed, and an aqueous light filters through the foliage-bound windows. The nave was then filled with square box pews, very high, so that we retired into a little private world, to pray as a family safe from the distractions of less familiar human beings. But the family included our Howkeld relations, of whom I shall soon speak; and my uncle, so patriarchal in his crisp white beard, officiated within our box. He was too stout to kneel on the hassocks which saved our knees from the cold stone floor, but the rest of us, sometimes eight or nine in number, knelt rigidly with hands pressed palm to palm.

The service was of extreme simplicity and dispatch. The sermon never lasted more than ten minutes, sometimes only five. The music came from a small harmonium, and there was a surpliced choir of perhaps two men and three boys. The congregation numbered in all perhaps forty souls — many less when the weather was wild. In winter the church was very cold, so we kept our overcoats on, and our breath issued in plumes as we sang the hymns. Once a month there was a Communion Service, and then for a few minutes, when our elders went to receive the Sacrament, we were left in possession of the box, at liberty to fidget and to let our eyes wander to the heraldic monsters displayed on the painted wooden hatchments, to the gallery where the servants sat, and to the trees waving across the leaded trellis of the windows.

After the service (which alternated each week between forenoon and afternoon, for the vicar served two parishes) the congregation gathered in groups and chatted peacefully as they walked up the path to the gate, and waited for the traps to be yoked up. The inhuman stillness of the situation aided our friendliness; our church was still where the monks who first built it twelve centuries ago had wanted it to be — in a wild valley, near a running beck, gray like a wild hawk nesting in a shelter of dark trees.

III

About half a mile above the church the beck suddenly slackens; part of its waters (in summer all) disappear down a fissure in the rocky bed. They keep to a subterranean channel for a mile and a half and suddenly reappear, bubbling up from a great depth, at the head of a field which belonged to my uncle, whose small estate was on that account called Howkeld, which means 'springhead.' Here we came often and always with great joy, as to an enchanted kingdom.

My uncle was a miller, and the mysterious water, which left its proper course and dived underground as if on very purpose to come up again in this particular spot to offer him its services,

ran deep and strong in a willow-fringed bend round the large field separating the mill from the road. At the end of the field it became a walled dam, and to the right overflowed through a lock into a round lake, which acted as a reservoir for times of drought. The private road to the mill followed the course of the stream and the dam, and then crossed by a bridge under which the water disappeared, combed by an iron grill. It emerged in a swift channel at the other side, and then sluiced in a roaring torrent over the water wheel. The churned water fell in a dazzling white foaming cascade to a whirling pool below the wheel, and then flowed away with diminishing contortions in a stream which ran round the large gardens and through the fields until it rejoined the mother stream a mile and a half farther south.

There was so much here for childish wonder! The mill itself, with its swinging straps and flickering wheels, the bright chains that hoisted the grain to the top story, the dusty machines in which we could see, through little windows, the grain trickling, and the general earth-shaking hum and whirr. The foreman's bright eyes twinkled from a face all powdered with flour, his clothes were like white mouse skin, his beard hoary. His voice was piping high, from having to make himself heard in the din. On Sundays, when the mill was still, flour dust deadened the sound of our feet on the worn wooden floors; our hands ran sweetly along smooth stepladders and horny ropes.

Perhaps because there was always a plentiful supply of grain, my aunt kept all kinds of poultry, and in the yard round the mill the most motley assembly of fowls strutted and pecked — not only various breeds of hens, but guinea fowl, turkeys, ducks, and geese. The house was at the end of the yard, T-shaped, its leg in line with the mill. A side door led into the leg, which was a low extension of the original building, and here was the Little Room where the family always lived, except on festive occasions.

It was a very low room with a varnished wooden beam running across the ceiling. Most of the space was taken up by a sideboard and a large dining table, and it is hard to think of this room without its complement of food. This was always spread in the most lavish way, with great hams and loins of beef, pies, pastries, and puddings, and, at tea time, cakes and tarts of the most alluring kind. My aunt was a famous cook; the mill and the gardens and the farm poured forth their plenty at the doorstep; by barter, in exchange for flour, most of the other essentials and luxuries of life were forthcoming. A deep spring of purest water flowed in the nearest field. War and famine could pass over the land and leave such bounty unaffected.

It was always peaceful here, a peace of guelder-roses and peonies, of laden fruit trees and patient waters. Perhaps this impression means that our visits were mainly confined to the summer; in winter I only remember the frozen lake, on which we learned to skate. People came from far and near on such occasions, and the ice rang with the swift metallic strokes of the skaters' feet. In summer the lake, round which a path led among the reeds and rushes, was given over to the water hens and wild ducks. Sometimes a flight of wild geese would come sweeping out of the sky on their way north.

IV

I have already described my uncle as patriarchal, and this was true of him in more than appearance. My aunt was the eldest (and my mother the young-

est) of the large family I have already mentioned. Some of these had married and migrated to other parts of the world, but such as remained, a goodly number, looked up to my uncle as the head of the clan into which he had married. His stout figure, his crisp white beard and twinkling eyes, his little linen bags of sample grain, his chuckle and his soft rich dialect, were familiar to the whole countryside; and at the time I speak of he was blessed with much happiness and prosperity. But during the next thirty years (he lived to be nearly ninety) he was to suffer many afflictions: the death of his favorite son, the bankruptcy of another, followed by the mortgaging of his own estate and finally a moratorium — and during all these tribulations he remained, a Lear of these Steppes, magnificent in courage and faith.

His children were contemporaries of my father and mother, and this introduced complications into our childish minds, for we called our cousins simply by their Christian names, whilst others who seemed their equals were aunts and uncles. The youngest of these cousins was not too old to enjoy the rôle of guide and initiator. One day he organized an expedition to explore the cave at Kirkdale. This famous cave extends for three hundred feet underground, and has more than one branch inside. The expedition, therefore, had to be undertaken with proper precautions. These consisted of candles, a large ball of binder-band, and the retriever, Jet. At the entry of the cave we made the end of the band secure, lit our candles, and crept forward, unrolling the ball as we went. The sides of the cave glistened in the candlelight; drops of moisture fell from the stalactites above us; the air we breathed was cold and dank. I cannot remember how far we penetrated, but at one point we were terrified by the sudden appearance of two fiery eyes in the darkness confronting us. Could it be one of the ancient hyenas, not yet a remnant of bones? But it was only Jet, who had run round some loop in the cave and come to meet us.

Once or twice we made expeditions up the dale beyond the cave and the church. It is one of the wildest and most beautiful places in the whole country; and I still remember my father driving some fine lady from the outer world along the track which went along the ridge of the dale, and how she exclaimed that it was more beautiful than Switzerland, a country of which we had no conception, but which we thought must be wonderful because people traveled far just to look at its hills and dales. This track up the dale ended at a house about two miles from the church. Here the dale became narrower and was filled with thick woods where lilies grew.

No road led through these woods, not even a path; but an adventurous spirit could make his way along the bed of the stream, and after a mile or two he would discover that the dale opened out again, to give space to a mill and a few farms and cottages. This is Bransdale, an oasis on the Moors, which in our time only had a poor moorland track to link it with the outer world. The people who lived here were strange and dark and beautiful, even to my childish eyes. For sometimes, when staying at Howkeld, I would go out for the day with the wagoners. Our load of grain and flour was drawn by great shaggy-footed cart horses, their harness bright with brass ornaments, their manes and tails plaited with colored ribbons — drawn over the wide purple Moors, where God seems to have left the earth clear of features to reveal the beauty of its naked form, till we dipped down into the green dales and lifted our burden.

V

The successive governesses who assisted my mother with our upbringing remain utterly vague to me. They must have occupied a large place in our lives, but, except for one insubstantial ghost of dark hair and spectacles, none of them can I recall. I know that they taught us to read, but I doubt if I had acquired that accomplishment before the age of seven. Then books immediately became my element. There was nothing to encourage me in this taste: there were no books in the living rooms, and my father read little except the *Yorkshire Post* and various agricultural papers. On Sunday he would read to us the lessons of the day (perhaps this was only when it was impossible to go to Kirkdale) and he made us learn the Collect by heart. The only book of his I still possess is *The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott.*

My mother read to us often, especially *Little Arthur's History of England, Evenings at Home, Forget-me-not,* and a tendentious story published by the Religious Tract Society called *Little Meg's Children* (by the author of *Jessica's First Prayer, The Children of Cloverly,* and so forth). I still possess *Little Meg's Children,* and I see now that its grim pathos, too simple to be wholly sentimental, may have worked into the texture of my unfolding imagination, above all to prepare me for the shock of death which waited for me so near, for the first chapter describes the death of Little Meg's mother, and the plight of the orphaned children. The book as a whole might not survive any critical inspection; but am I still bound to childish wonder when I feel some merit in sentences like these?

> She turned her face round to the wall with a deep sigh, and closed her eyelids, but her lips kept moving silently from time to time. Meg cried softly to herself in her chair before the fire, but presently she dozed a little for very heaviness of heart, and dreamed that her father's ship was come into dock, and she, and her mother, and the children, were going down the dingy streets to meet him. She awoke with a start; and creeping gently to her mother's side, laid her warm little hand upon hers. It was deadly cold with a chill such as little Meg had never before felt; and when her mother neither moved nor spoke in answer to her repeated cries, she knew that she was dead.
>
> For the next day, and the night following, the corpse of the mother lay silent and motionless in the room where her three children were living. Meg cried bitterly at first; but there was Robin to be comforted, and the baby to be played with when it laughed and crowed in her face. Robin was nearly six years old, and had gained a vague dim knowledge of death, by having followed, with a troop of other curious children, many a funeral that had gone out from the dense and dirty dwellings to the distant cemetery, where he had crept forward to the edge of the grave, and peeped down into what seemed to him a very dark and dreadful depth. When little Meg told him mother was dead, and lifted him up to kneel on the bedside, and kiss her icy lips for the last time, his childish heart was filled with an awe which almost made him shrink from the sight of that familiar face, scarcely whiter or more sunken now than it had been for many a day past. . . .

We must have wept often over the tribulations of Little Meg, and may have been duly impressed by her Christian constancy. Were we held by anything but the pathos of the story? This strange country of dingy streets and attics (an attic perhaps I could visualize), of lack of bread and clothes, of evil and misery — it was as fairy-like as any story that I had heard; as hard to realize, but just as easy to believe. The emotions were involved, and the imagination, but nothing like reflection or reasoning. We were moved in exactly the same way, and perhaps

even to a greater degree, by the adventures of Little Red Ridinghood. Both she and Meg were 'Little,' and both survived the perils they encountered. When even the perils we ourselves encounter as children leave so little impression on our sensibility (just because we have no reasoning power to trace their consequences), why should the fictitious pathos of a story have more effect? The perturbations of the intellect are a danger to the instinctive basis of life; no wonder, then, that nature is wise enough to wrap us in a cocoon of insensibility until such time as we have the power to counter intelligence with deeper intuitions.

Little Meg's attic could be visualized because we had our own attic at the top of the house. It was approached by a steep staircase just outside the nursery door. On the left, when you reached the top, were two bedrooms, partitioned off and occupied by the maids. But the rest of the space under the roof was free. One side was used for storing apples, and their musty sweetness pervaded the whole room. There were several chests and wardrobes, full of old wedding dresses, and many other things which I do not distinctly remember. But here also was the only considerable store of books in the house, a miscellaneous collection of foxed volumes of sermons and devotional works which can have had little appeal to me, but which I pored over with an instinctive love. But two larger tomes were an inexhaustible mine of delight. They were bound volumes of the *Illustrated London News* for the year of the Great Exhibition (presumably 1850), full of the steel engravings of the period.

My lust for books was not satisfied in the attic; I soon craved for novelty. But I must have realized thus early that such a longing was a personal affair, to be fulfilled only by a personal effort. Looking round for a means to this end, I seized on the postman as the only link with the printed world. He came daily on his long pedestrian round, for if there were no letters there was always the *Yorkshire Post*. I made friends with him, and confided to him my secret desires. He was sympathetic, but his acquaintance with literature was limited. It was limited, in fact, to a lurid pink periodical called, I think, the *Police Gazette*, and this he passed on to me; but though I remember the act of reading it, it left no particular impression on me. Evidently its contents had none of the reality of a fairy world.

I return again and again, in retrospection, to this early untutored interest in books, for how could it have developed, in such isolation and such neglect, but for the presence of some inborn disposition? And faith in such a disposition becomes, with the growth of the personality, a controlling factor. At least, we are only happy so long as our life expands in ever-widening circles from the upward gush of our early impulses; and even love, of which the child is ignorant, is only real in so far as it is a transformation, in adolescence, of our first instinctive attachments.

VI

One day my father brought a delightful toy back from Northallerton: it was a small musical box which played 'For there's nae luck about the house.' But my mother — perhaps then, or perhaps shortly afterward, when there was sufficient cause — thought the tune was ominous. My only sister was a baby at that time, between two and three years old. Our farm was called the Grange, and, though it had no moat, this daughter was christened Mariana. Perhaps that too was ominous, for a sad song goes by that name. Mariana was fair as sunlight, and

smiled to the tinkle of the musical box. And that is all I remember of her, for that spring I was suddenly sent away. A few days later my aunt told me that Mariana had become an angel, and the next time we went to Kirkdale I was taken to see the unmeaning mound that covered her body.

Apart from this fatal musical box, the only other music I ever heard in my childhood was Fiddler Dick's. Every year the young horses bred on the farm had to be 'broken in,' and this was work for a specialist, who, like the blacksmith, paid us periodical visits. Fiddler Dick was a natty little man, with a hot swarthy complexion and waxed moustaches — probably he was of gypsy blood. He would stay a few days at the Farm, sleeping in the loft above the saddle room. He always brought his fiddle with him, and after dinner, or in the evening, used to play to a wondering audience. I was fascinated by this man — fascinated when he stood in the cow pasture, his neat leggings winking in the sunshine, a wild young colt galloping, trotting, walking in a circle at the end of a long rope, controlled by Fiddler Dick's flickering whip — still more fascinated when the brown fiddle came out of its box and a sound, never imagined before, was conjured out of the air.

Now I had seen, in a chest in the attic, just such a brown fiddle, and one day when Fiddler Dick was at the farm I brought it down and asked him to teach me to make such music. But some of the strings were broken, and the bow had no horsehair. Some untwisted binder-band served to repair the bow, and we got some catgut from the nearest cobbler for the strings. Fiddler Dick rejoiced in the word 'catgut,' and cats took on a new significance for me. I cannot now believe that the sounds which issued from this improvised instrument bore any resemblance to the plaintive voice of a violin, but I retained my longing to play.

Later, when I went away to school, I persuaded my mother to let me take music as an extra subject, and she consented. But I was put to the piano, which had no charm for me, no urgency of aspiration. I could not rival Fiddler Dick on such an instrument! Besides, instead of Fiddler Dick, I had for a teacher a fierce Dutchman, bristling with long hair and a silk bow tie, flashing with rings. At the end of the year my enthusiasm had so waned that I could not urge my mother to pay the extra fees for music. But I still clung to the old violin, with the vague hope that I might one day learn to play it. It was still in my possession at the beginning of the war, but my mother died at this time, and in the subsequent confusion the violin disappeared. I had expected to find it among the few possessions I had stored in a cellar against my return, but it was not there.

I should perhaps never have given it another thought but for an experience of several years later. I came late one evening, after a walk along a forest road in Bavaria, the moon staring at me through the cage bars of the trees, to a large castle where many guests were being entertained. Supper was finished, and there was not a soul to be seen except a porter who took my bag and told me that everyone was in the music room, even the servants, and that I had better make my way there and wait for the end. I was directed to a small balcony, which I could enter without disturbing the audience. The room was in darkness except for an electric lamp at the far end, above the dais where the music was being played. It was a violin sonata, and I was immediately held, not so much by the music as by the image which came into my mind as I gazed at the woman play-

ing the violin. Her slender body was like a stem on which nodded, to the rhythm of the music, a strange exotic flower. The corolla of this flower was a human face, very white beneath an arch of raven-black hair, which seemed to brood over its coiled tawny petals, and to preserve an essential stillness in the midst of the force which agitated them. The notes of the piano, to whose rise and fall it seemed bound in some inevitable way, might have been the voice of a stream urging its way past the resisting stem of this flower swaying above its swift current.

All my early fascination for this instrument, awakened long before by Fiddler Dick and long dormant, awoke at this moment with a fierce inburning incandescence, a glow in which there was no longer any sense of aspiration or self-directed interest, a fire of renunciation and surrender. Once more an early impulse had found its fulfillment, its transformation, to become a conscious interest in my life.

VII

These scenes of childhood end abruptly with the death of my father. In the winter of my ninth year, he was taken ill with pneumonia; the house became muted and silent. Mrs. Walker, the nurse from one of the cottages by Peacock's farm, whom I have not mentioned before, but who had attended my mother in all her confinements, was called in; and our cousin the doctor came from Kirby daily. He and my father were fast friends, and, when the illness became critical, all his energies were devoted to the saving of this precious life. But in vain. Rheumatic fever developed. The air of anguish in everyone, my mother's tearful eyes — these were obvious even to us children. One day leeches were brought, and stood in a glass jar on a shelf in the dairy. They were black, blind, and sinister. But then we were taken away.

I went to Howkeld, and one night I suffered intolerable earache, so that I cried aloud and was poulticed with onions. The pain had gone in the morning, but by my aunt's tears I knew that my father was dead. The next day I was driven back to the farm. The blinds were drawn; everywhere it was very still, and dark. We were taken upstairs to say good-bye to my dead father. The cold wintry light came evenly through the open slats of the Venetian blind. My father lay on the bed, sleeping, as he always did, with his arms on the coverlet, straight down each side of his body. His beautiful face was very white, except for the red marks on his temples where the leeches had clung. I was told to kiss that face; it was deadly cold, like the face of Little Meg's mother.

I felt stunned, but could not comprehend my loss, nor the grief of those about me. I moved away in the unnatural stillness, walking in a living sleep. Downstairs candles were burning on a table laden with cold meat and cakes. Then we all drove to Kirkdale, slowly over the frozen flint roads, and there a grave was ready dug at the east end of the church, by the side of Mariana's. The dark cirque of fir trees rose in the background, sighing in the frosty wind. The bell in the gray tower clanged its toneless note. The horses were not unyoked. Six friends of my father carried his coffin into the ancient church, and then to the grave. The earth fell with a hollow sound on to the lowered coffin. My mother sobbed against my uncle's shoulder. The last Amen was murmured in that immemorial stillness, and when we had taken a last look at the forlorn coffin we drove back swiftly over the frozen flint roads, horse hoofs beating clearly in the metallic air.

A few weeks later the sheep were driven into pens, the cattle labeled, and a crowd of farmers from far and near assembled at the farm. A wagon was drawn out on the Green, to serve as a platform for the auctioneer. Everything was sold, except a few pieces of old furniture which my mother was fond of — even the books from the attic, the sermons tied in bundles, and the two volumes of the *Illustrated London News*. *Little Meg, Little Arthur, Evenings at Home*, and *Forget-me-not* alone were left for me.

We went to stay with a cousin at the other end of the Vale, but only for a few months. Then my eldest brother and I left for a boarding school, far away from these scenes. My childhood, the first phase of my life, was isolated; it grew detached in my memory and floated away like a leaf on a stream; but it never finally disappeared, as these pages witness. Instead, as this body of mine passes through the rays of experience, it meets bright points of ecstasy which come from the heart of this lost realm. But the realm is never wholly lost; it is reconstructed stage by stage whenever the sensibility recovers its first innocence, whenever eye and ear and touch and tongue and quivering nostril revive sensation in all its child-godly passivity.

To-day I found a withered stem of honesty, and shelled the pods between my thumb and finger; silver pennies, which grew between the fragrant currant bushes. Their glistening surfaces, seeded, the very faint rustle they make in the wind — these sensations come direct to me from a moment thirty years ago. As they expand in my mind, they carry everything in their widening circle — the low crisp box hedge which would be at my feet, the pear trees on the wall behind me, the potato flowers on the patch beyond the bushes, the cow pasture, the fairy rings — everything shimmers for a second on the expanding rim of my memory. The farthest tremor of this perturbation is lost only at the finest edge where sensation passes beyond the confines of experience; for memory is a flower which only opens fully in the kingdom of Heaven, where the eye is eternally innocent.

(*The End*)

THOUGHTS REVEALED

Now come, custodians, reveal
The charges you have tended;
Your stewardship is ended.
The bolts are drawn: out, out they steal
From your safe keeping,
Sheep's clothing may no more conceal
The lean wolves' leaping,
And vainly, shepherd, you disclaim
The hungry flock you know by name.

Your thoughts are wolves — and his, whose gaze profound
Plumbs to its dark green depths the pool of learning,
Are silver fishes, swimming round and round,
Steering a course mysteriously charted
Among the lily stems, but still returning
To that same reedy bed from which they started.

But she, she has opened the cage and her birds are free,
And the listener, remembering how they were used to sing
Like small, gray nuns in the cage, stands amazed to see
The jeweled crimson that flashes beneath the wing.

FREDA C. BOND

GOOD OLD STORMY

BY BILL ADAMS

I

One could, I suppose, tell this yarn in the third person; but I would rather not. It is bad form, I know, to tell a yarn in the first person when one is one's self the hero. I can't help that. There is no fiction in my tale, not a word. Any old sailor will tell you that I in no way exaggerate in the matter of our fare.

The sea-apprentice breed is extinct. It passed with the passing of the sailing ship. There was never a breed quite like it, I think; never a brotherhood quite so comradely. To-day the petrels hover above the trails we sailed, and see no ship pass by.

In my old ship there were eight of us. We came from all classes; but class, so rigidly observed ashore, made no difference at all. Some of us were gentlemen's sons, others not. One was the son of a Member of Parliament, another of an army officer of high rank, another of a barrister. There was the son of a poor board-school master; he dropped his aitches. There was the son of a commercial traveler. There was a farmer's son, there was a Belgian boy, and there was myself. The sons of the M. P., the army officer, and the barrister, each of whom had been to one or another of the great English public schools, were gentlemen's sons, of course. But no gentleman drops his aitches, and a commercial traveler is scarcely a gentleman. Whether or no a farmer could be a gentleman would depend on how big a farmer he was. If he was a very big farmer, and did no work at all himself, he might just scrape through. That leaves the Belgian boy and me. When the ship left port the Belgian boy's father was there to see him off. He wore kid gloves, a long-tailed black coat, spats, and a silk top hat. That placed him. He was a gentleman.

Our skipper, the Old Man, Stormalong, was a Bluenose. He had a sharp thin face, cold gray eyes, a little pointed beard, and a close-clipped moustache. We both hated and feared him. He ignored us utterly, unless he saw one of us doing some piece of sailor work not exactly as it should be done, or found one of us, when at the wheel, not holding the ship absolutely true to her course. On those occasions harsh words snapped from his thin lips and his eyes flashed. He had been skipper for many years, and all the time his wife, the Old Woman, had sailed with him. The Old Woman also ignored us. When we spoke of them it was with curses. Blaming the Old Man for our hard fare, we, in the hasty judgment of youth, did not know or did not allow ourselves to think that, just as we were his bound servants, so was he the bound servant of the owner for whom he sailed. It never entered our young heads that he too was the victim of circumstance; that his stern manner, in reality no more than a pose, was forced on him

by the hard need of that iron discipline that must ever be maintained if storms are to be fought successfully, nerve-racking calms endured, great cold borne, and days and nights of breathless heat lived through without complaint voiced by servitors forever hungry and oftentimes athirst.

The Old Man ate no pantiles. At his table, cabin biscuits took the place of those common ship biscuits, and were fine fare. And for him there was fresh bread made from good white flour. None but the best and freshest pieces of pork or junk ever went to the cabin. Even had he taken no private stores to sea, he would have fared far better than did we. But he supplemented the stores furnished by the owner with stores of his own, and the Old Woman was a most excellent cook. In the steward's pantry, which adjoined the cabin dining saloon, was a little stove, and often when we were at hard labor on the ropes of quarter-deck or poop, or fighting to hold the ship true to her course in strong winds and rough seas, delicious fragrances would come to us.

Since an apprentice served for four years with no pay at all, we never had any money of our own, and for pocket money depended upon the generosity of our people. On leaving port we took to sea with us such stores as we were able to buy with what they could afford to give us. It was never much, but for the first few weeks after sailing we lived well. With two small holes punched in the top of the can and the lips applied to one of them, a hungry apprentice could make a pleasing meal on canned milk in the long watches of the night. We never wasted it in the coffee or the skilly. Good shore biscuits took the place of 'flint-hard' or of age-softened pantiles. When they were gone, good shore jam helped pantiles down. Used in liberal quantities, pickles made the ship's salt pork or junk, both of them quite often so spoiled as to be really unfit for human food, more or less edible. Eating chocolate and fruit cake were good at any time. One could go to the wheel with some of either tucked away in a pocket, and, if the wind was light and the ship steering well, nibble while one steered — unobserved in the darkness by the officer of the watch. Life was endurable, even pleasant, so long as our shore grub lasted.

II

On the voyage of which I write, the ship's fare was perhaps a little worse than usual. One of the company's vessels had been sold, and such stores as had been in her had been transferred to our ship. Her last voyage had been a long one. When, a few days after we sailed, a barrel of her pork and a barrel of her junk were opened, the smell of them pervaded the decks from forecastle head to poop. We were bound round the Horn, and due to be down there in June — which is the worst month.

One day, a week or so after we left port, the suggestion arose that we cease using our private stores and keep what was left of them till we were off the Horn. We talked it over and finally agreed to do so.

The apprentices' quarters, known as the half deck, were just abaft the mainmast. There were two tiny rooms, one for the four boys of the mate's watch and the other for the four of the second mate's watch. They opened on a common entrance alleyway in which hung our oilskins and sea boots. In each there was just room for four bunks, our four sea chests, and the little table fixed to the outer bulkhead. At the far end was a locker in which were kept our tin plates, pannikins, hook pots, forks, and spoons.

Having nailed up our remaining stores, we set them away in the lockers.

It was a fine Sunday afternoon when we made our decision. In fine weather, once the decks had been scrubbed down in the morning watch, there was no work on Sunday. We were sitting in the half deck, idling our time away. We had none of us eaten any pantiles since the voyage began, and the bread barge on the deck in one corner was full of them. The army officer's son was painting the picture of the ship on one now, having given the pantile a coat of varnish the previous evening. As soon as the painting was dry he would give it another coat. Through two of the holes in it he had passed a length of varnished twine, whereby his girl, to whom he would give it at the end of the voyage, might hang it up. Such souvenirs were often given by apprentices to their sweethearts. The barrister's son was rummaging in the bread barge, looking for another pantile fresh and hard enough to paint a picture on. Being from the old stock of the sold ship, most of them were soft. When he presently found one, he laid it on the palm of his hand and brought it down forcibly against the corner of the table. It did n't break. 'That's normal; it'll do,' he said; and then changed his mind about painting a picture on it. 'There won't be any hard pantiles left soon. I'll keep it for supper,' he said.

Having set it aside, he took a soft one from the barge and began to crumble it. It was full of white crawlers. He picked out a long, lean one. 'Come on,' he said to the Belgian boy, 'I'll give you a race.' While the Belgian boy crumbled a soft pantile, seeking a fast-looking crawler, the challenger stuck two pins at each end of the table to serve as goal posts. With a bet of a pound of tobacco on the outcome, they raced their crawlers from end to end of the table, pricking them along, holding them to a straight course, with pins. The Belgian boy won, and was at once challenged by the schoolmaster's son, who had meanwhile selected for himself a good-looking crawler from another soft pantile.

'I don' vant no more tobacco. I got plenty. Vot you bets?' asked the Belgian boy.

'I'll bet you a winter undershirt,' said the schoolmaster's son.

The Belgian boy, who for some reason was habitually lucky, won again. Such races were a common pastime with apprentices.

III

Eight bells clanged out. Soon it would be supper time. Some of us crumbled soft pantiles, removed the crawlers, and, having mixed the crumbs with scraps of salt-pork fat, took them to the cook to fry for our supper. The dish was known as 'dandy funk.' Others, since to break pantiles with teeth or hands was not possible, broke hard ones to fragments by beating them against the corner of the table. Fried with salt-pork fat, they became 'cracker hash.' The barrister's son dipped his hard pantile into salt water for a few seconds, set it on his tin plate, and took it to the cook. When in a few minutes he fetched it from the galley oven, it had swelled to several times its normal size. So treated, pantiles were known as 'midshipman's muffins.' They were very filling. Their flavor reminded one of the smell of an old board floor that has been recently washed. Such, with thin hot skilly that was supposed to be tea, but bore no resemblance to it except perhaps in color, was our supper. At breakfast next morning, there being then no time to prepare special dishes, we should eat our pantiles straight, with bitter black coffee.

Our dinner on Monday consisted of split-pea soup and highly odoriferous boiled salt pork. Wednesday's and Friday's dinner would be precisely the same. Owing to scarcity of fresh water, the pork was boiled in the soup, which made the soup very salty and of a rich unpleasant flavor. On the other three days of the week we should dine on bean soup and salt junk. Junk, said to be beef, was commonly understood to be horse. Whether pork or junk, there was never enough lean for more than a couple of mouthfuls for each of us.

On Monday evening, when the dog-watch came and we went off duty, the schoolmaster's son started to sing an old familiar sea song: —

'Cheer, boys, 'urrah! For I tell you for a fact,
There's nothing done in a lime-juice ship
contrary to the hact!
Then wot's the use o' growlin' w'en you know
you'll get your w'ack
Of limejuice and vinegar accordin' to the hact?'

The act referred to was the Board of Trade act that regulated the feeding of sailors. 'Limey' sailors in the nineties were living on practically the same fare as that served to the crews of Nelson's ships.

While the schoolmaster's son sang, an apprentice from each watch went aft to the cabin door, where the steward served to each of them enough coarse brown sugar and canned marmalade to last, supposedly, till the next Monday evening. For every one of us there was a half pannikin of each (a pannikin held a pint). There was also, for the boys of each watch, a large bottle of poor vinegar. When they brought the week's 'whack' to the half deck we sat down to supper. Each of us spread all his marmalade on a midshipman's muffin, placed the week's allowance of sugar on top, and devoured it at one meal — our invariable custom.

A week passed. Pantiles, spoiled pork and junk, pea and bean soup. Lime juice, a half gill each at noon every day to ward off the scurvy. Always vinegar, in which one might dip his evil-smelling meat. Skilly and coffee to be thrown to the sea, whither we not infrequently threw also the bitter, lip-puckering lime juice. But on Saturday there was, as sometimes happened on a Saturday, something in the way of a change of diet. That day at dinner we were served 'strike-me-blind' — boiled rice with blackstrap molasses. A damnable mess, yet a change.

On Sunday came the treat of the week. A great day, Sunday, for then we ate 'Harriet Lane' in place of salt meat. Harriet Lane came in tall blue corrugated cans, similar to those which held the marmalade. Eleven pounds to the can. Harriet Lane was an underworld woman who had been murdered many years ago in Sydney, New South Wales. Her body was never found, and it was said that she had been canned for sailors. Her lean was packed down in the cans in long tough strings, coiled down like rope. There was never any fat on her. The labels on the cans said 'Queensland Mutton.'

IV

It took a good deal of forbearance to endure the ship's food, with our good shore grub always in sight. But the Horn, with its savage gales and bitter cold, was an old story with all of us. Down the North Atlantic, across the line, and on into the southeast trade winds we hungered. With the barrister's son, and the sons of the farmer and commercial traveler, I was in the second mate's watch.

One dark night the barrister's son reached a hand in through a galley port that the cook had forgotten to close, and found four potatoes that

were intended for the cabin breakfast table. He brought them to the half deck, where we peeled them and ate them raw. On a blazing day in the doldrums when the army officer's son, eldest apprentice in the mate's watch, 'whacked out' the noon meal into four equal portions, he was accused by the M.P.'s son of having taken for himself a hair more than his just share. A fist fight followed. Such occurrences were common in the lime-juicers. Continual hunger made of well-schooled lads from gentle homes plain savages at times. But our ill feeling never lasted. We soon forgot, jested, and were brothers again.

Yet, good chums though we all were, there was much rivalry between the watches. We of the second mate's watch considered ourselves smarter than the mate's boys. They thought themselves smarter than we. All of us welcomed any test that came to give fair trial. Hungry though we were, curse ship and sea though we might, we yet took a sailorly pride in our work.

On a fine afternoon while we were running down the southeast trade wind, I saw the steward come up from the booby hatch on his way to the cook's galley with the stores for the cabin supper. An idea struck me.

The booby hatch was a small hatch directly abaft the big cargo hatch. It opened on hinges, as a skylight does, and in fine weather was kept open to afford ventilation for the between-decks hold. A ladder led from it to the 'tween-decks. A short distance from the foot of the ladder was a bulkhead that divided the storeroom from the hold, and in the centre of the bulkhead was a sliding door. To go from the storeroom through the sliding door into the hold and thence to the galley with the cabin stores was a much shorter way than to go back up to the pantry, across the saloon, and out to the quarter-deck.

When we were off duty that evening I said to my three comrades, 'I wonder if the steward leaves the sliding door open. If he does, we could maybe raid the Old Man's stores.'

'Not on your life!' said the barrister's son. 'We'd be in a devil of a mess if we got caught!'

'Why get caught?' I asked. But my comrades were of one mind.

'All right. That settles it, then,' said I.

Later, in the middle watch that night, I broached the subject again. We had eaten dandy funk for supper and should be eating pantiles for breakfast. It was Tuesday night, and there would be no more sugar or marmalade for another week. The pork of the previous day's dinner had been too evil altogether. This time, instead of dissenting, my comrades considered the matter. The more we talked, the hungrier we became. Soon the farmer's son suggested that one of us go down and see if the bulkhead door was open. But the night was clear and starry, and we had no business on the quarter-deck. If one of us ventured toward the booby hatch, the second mate would be sure to see him. We must wait, then, till the ship was in the cloudy weather that might be expected once she was out of the trade wind. And on one thing we agreed unanimously: we would tell the mate's apprentices nothing of our plan.

On the following day the commercial traveler's son was at work on one of the boats above and at one side of the booby hatch. When I chanced to pass beneath him he called to me to lend him my knife for a moment, saying that he had left his in the half deck. I tossed the knife up to him, and in a moment he tossed it back. And he so tossed it that it struck and fell down the booby hatch. I understood at once, and with a good excuse

to go down the hold, where no one was ever allowed while the ship was at sea, I descended to retrieve the knife. It took but an instant to find it, and another to dart to and back from the bulkhead. The door was open.

A week or so later the trade wind left us. It was Saturday. Evening set in cloudy and windless. The second mate's watch was to be on duty from eight to midnight, off from midnight to four o'clock, and on again from four to eight. Between eight o'clock and midnight would be the time for us to carry out our raid.

Having waited till well after ten o'clock to make sure that the Old Man had gone below, we gathered barefooted at the booby hatch. There was no star in the sky. Now and again an idle sail flapped in the darkness, or a rope creaked. The footsteps of the second mate, pacing to and fro on the poop above us, were distinctly audible. While our two comrades kept watch, lest he take it into his head to come down from the poop and walk forward, the farmer's son and I slipped noiselessly down the hatch. As we started for the storeroom a rat scampered away. With pounding hearts, we stood still. Silence fell again. Not till we were at the bulkhead did we dare to strike a match, lest the second mate see its flare. A moment more then, and we were crawling on all fours over the great iron tanks that contained the ship's pantile supply.

Directly above us, only their cabin deck planks between them and us, the Old Man and the Old Woman slumbered. Quickly we found that section of the storeroom in which their private stores were stowed, and hastily we filled the big gunny sack that we had brought. Match after match flared while captain's biscuits, canned milk, beef essences, canned tripe, canned vegetables, canned liver, item after item of unspeakable deliciousness, dropped softly into our sack. The burned-out matches we put carefully into our pockets. The ship's cat miaowed, and we gasped with apprehension. But soon the four of us were safely back in the half deck, hiding our booty in our sea chests and under our straw mattresses. Then we returned to the hatch, and while the others went below the farmer's son and I kept watch.

Rousing our comrades of the mate's watch at a few minutes before midnight, we gave no sign that anything unusual had occurred during our time on duty. Pitying our slow-witted fellows, we laughed up our sleeves. And when they woke us again at four o'clock they had no idea at all that we were wakening to feast.

V

Sunday morning broke fair and fine, and, with well-filled bellies, never a care knew we. A light, steady, leading wind had risen during the middle watch, and under full sail the ship was standing south. The opening of a sailor's perfect day. By seven o'clock we had finished washing her down and were sitting in the half deck, smoking our pipes, ready to rouse out the mate's apprentices at seven bells, that they might get their miserable breakfasts before going on duty at eight. Suddenly a shadow darkened our doorway. Supposing that the second mate had come to order us out for something, we looked up — and were struck dumb.

'Which of you young blackguards has been stealing my stores?'

In silence we stared up at Stormy. Suppose we denied? And then suppose he ordered the half deck searched? There was no possible escape. What dire sentence would he pass on us? But, sailing under Stormy, I had been well trained to coolness in emergency.

In plain sight in the locker were the stores that we were keeping till we should be off the Horn. I pointed to them now. 'Sir,' said I, in an aggrieved voice, 'we have stores of our own. We don't need to steal from anyone.'

'I'll treat you all alike till I find out who it was,' snarled Stormy, in accents utterly contemptuous. And then he was gone.

Voiceless, we looked at one another. What would that treatment be? And suppose we owned up, what then would be our fate? Would he, when our apprentice days were done, give us bad references? *There* was the black cloud that shadowed us. For an apprentice with a bad reference to obtain an officer's certificate was impossible. With a stroke of his pen he could ruin our careers, render vain the hard years of our apprenticeship.

And then, while we sat mute, there was a movement in the other side of the half deck. The mate's innocent apprentices were stirring, wakened by Stormy's voice. A moment, and they appeared in the entrance alleyway. How they would jeer at us now!

But our comrades looked down on us with no merriment in their faces. There was, instead, in the face of each of them a strangely sheepish look. It was the army officer's son who broke the silence, and no four lads were ever more surprised than were we.

On the night when first I had suggested raiding the storeroom, two of the mate's apprentices had been on the deck close to one of our open ports and had heard my words. They had heard the response, 'Not on your life!' They had heard my 'All right, then. That settles it.' And, ever since, they had been waiting for a dark night that they themselves might act on my scorned suggestion. In the middle watch of the night just past they had been down to the storeroom and had stolen stores enough to fill two big gunny sacks! We heard how, while the son of the schoolmaster was below, the mate had shouted an order to trim the sails for a wakening breeze. In his haste to get to the deck the schoolmaster's son had let fall a can from his too full sack, and, not daring to strike a match that he might look for it, had left it where it fell. Later the steward, on his way to the galley, had found the can, of course. That was evident. He had put two and two together and had reported our theft to the Old Man. So we were able to tell our comrades that it was owing to them that the theft had been discovered. That was an obvious technicality, for, with such a large amount stolen, our theft must have been discovered very soon. But they were good fellows, and, with scarce any dissent, agreed that it was they who were to blame. What to do, then? There was but one thing to do. The booty must be returned.

Each with a laden sack on his shoulder, the mate's apprentices went aft to the cabin. And in a few moments they were back, with the still-laden sacks. And their eyes were merry. Gleefully they repeated the Old Man's words: 'You've stolen it. Now you can keep it and take the consequences.'

We put the morrow out of mind, seated ourselves to a feast, and, feasting, talked things over. The decision at which we arrived was that, provided the punishment should be no more than plain sea misery, the mate's apprentices should take it. It was a plain case of '*sauve qui peut* and devil take the hindmost,' and they were the hindmost. But we of the second mate's watch agreed unanimously that if it were to be, eventually, a case of getting bad references, then we would own up and share that dreaded fate.

We were still feasting when the steward appeared with a message from

the Old Man. The Old Man had been to the storeroom, taken tally of his stores, and found the theft to be far larger than he had at first supposed. We were to return the booty. Once more we loaded the sacks. At the last moment, as the mate's boys were starting for the cabin, I, unable to bear parting with so much delight, removed from one of the sacks two big cans of preserves. While our comrades were gone I took them to the sail locker and hid them in the folds of a sail. The foremast sailors were below at breakfast. There was no one to see me. I would retrieve them later, when the storm had blown over.

Days passed, and nothing happened. Our comrades suffered no punishment of any sort. It must be, then, that bad references were to be our fate. A gloomy cloud hung over us.

In due course I went to the sail locker to retrieve the two cans of preserves. They were gone. Some unsuspected sailor of the foremast crew had seen me hide them, and had taken them. We damned him for a low thief.

VI

One morning, a week or so after our raid, the second mate's watch were hoisting a sail that had been furled during the night. I was pulling forehand, straight down, my hands reaching high on the halyards, when the rope parted. With the weight of the whole watch upon it, the heavy halyard block came down squarely on the top of my head. When I regained consciousness I was seated in a chair in the after saloon, with blood streaming down my forehead. On one side of me stood the Old Man, with a basin of water in his hands; on the other the Old Woman, with bandages. As soon as he was sure that I was not seriously hurt the Old Man went to the deck to oversee the repairs made necessary by the parted halyards; the spar that we had been hoisting had snapped in two. I was left alone with the Old Woman.

Not a word did she speak while she bandaged my wound, and not a word did I. But when I had risen, and was starting somewhat unsteadily away, she spoke. 'Do you think you could eat some bacon?' she asked. And I replied, most modestly, that I thought I could. So she sat me down at the table in the dining saloon, and set before me fried bacon, and doughnuts made by her own hands. Oh, glory of glories! And when I was done she said, 'Come back this evening, and I'll dress your head again.' You may be sure that I went to the cabin when I knew that the cabin supper was over. My plan worked. When my head was dressed I again sat down to a plate of cabin leavings. 'Come aft again in the morning,' said the Old Woman when I rose to go.

Morning and evening I went to the cabin, always when I knew that the cabin breakfast or supper was done. Never a pantile did I touch; day by day I breakfasted and supped on cabin leavings. At the end of a week, aware that there must come an end to my joys once my wound was healed, I one night removed the bandages and gave it a good scratching. When I went to the cabin next morning the Old Woman asked how it had come to be opened. 'I was aloft furling a sail last night,' said I. That was the truth, and the prevarication escaped her. 'The canvas must have flapped against your head,' said she, and I said never a word. 'Poor devils!' said I to my envious comrades. 'Don't you just wish it was your heads that had been busted?' They muttered and growled and loved me very little indeed while I watched them eat their cracker hash and dandy funk.

In due course I again gave my wound a good scratching. But that time the Old Woman asked no question, and when I rose said nothing about any meal. 'You need n't come aft any more. Your head's all right now,' she said. For a moment she looked smiling into my face. And then she added, 'You don't know how glad the Captain and I are that you were not among the boys who stole our stores.' I mumbled something, and took my departure. Returning to the half deck where my comrades sat at their pantiles, I sat down too and reached for a pantile. They jeered, they hooted at my downfall. And, having a trick up my cuff, I said never a word till they were done. Then, imitating the Old Woman's voice, I repeated to them those last words of hers. 'How does it feel to be a low-down thief?' I asked them. Their curses were to me as water on the back of a duck. And it ended, of course, in our all laughing together.

VII

We had a wild time of it rounding the Horn. Weeks of incessant hard labor in howling winter gales. Ravening great seas across which the snow drove. Our shore grub soon gone, we knew continual hunger. But we did our job. Day after day we toiled, the flinty eyes of the Old Man ever upon us while we wrenched at her kicking wheel, while, high aloft, we struggled with her frozen sails. And so, by and by, we brought her into the Pacific, back to the trade winds once more. And always, bitter gale or balmy trade wind, the thought of bad references was with us.

When we came to port the army officer's son and I were out of our apprenticeships. The time had come for us to go to the cabin and ask the Old Man for references. So the army officer's son went first, and we others waited. If he returned with a bad reference, then I must go and own up that I was equal thief with him. It seemed long while he was gone, but at last he came, and he came merry-eyed. Gayly he held his reference out for us to see.

> This is to certify that the bearer . . . has served his four-year apprenticeship in the ship . . . under my command. I have always found him a strictly sober and honest young man, at all times attentive to his duties. I think that he will make a good officer, and it is with pleasure that I give him this recommendation.

So then I too went aft to ask for a reference. And when I came back the half deck rang with the laughter of my seven comrades. Only I did not laugh — for in my reference the word 'honest' was underlined.

VIII

Stormy is dead these many years. In days after we had left the sea, I used to visit him at his home. Though there was gray in my hair, he always addressed me as 'boy.'

'Boy,' asked Stormy one day, 'why did the owners make me feed my crews as they did?'

Once I tried to ask Stormy if he remembered the time when his apprentices raided his stores, but could not bring myself to do so. If to-day I sometimes feel a bit guilty toward him, that is no one's affair but my own.

Old Stormy's dead and gone to rest!
To me waye, aye, O Stormalong!
Of all the skippers he was best!
Aye, aye, aye, Mister Stormalong!

We'll dig his grave with a silver spade!
To me waye, aye, O Stormalong!
We'll lower him down with a golden chain!
Aye, aye, aye, Mister Stormalong!

RADIO CITY

From Real Estate to Art

BY M. R. WERNER

I

THE peroration to the official book issued by Rockefeller Center, Inc., reads:

'Beauty, utility, dignity, and service are to be combined in the completed project.

'Rockefeller Center is not Greek, but it suggests the balance of Greek architecture. It is not Babylonian, but it retains the flavor of Babylon's magnificence. It is not Roman, yet it has Rome's enduring qualities of mass and strength. Nor is it of the Taj Mahal, which it resembles in mass composition, though in it has been caught the spirit of the Taj — aloof, generous in space, quieting in its serenity.

'The Taj Mahal lies in solitary grandeur on the shimmering bank of the Jumna River. Rockefeller Center will stand in the midstream rush of New York. The Taj is like an oasis in the jungle, its whiteness tense against the gloomy greenness of the forest. Rockefeller Center will be a beautiful entity in the swirling life of a great metropolis — its cool heights standing out against an agitated man-made sky line. And yet the two, far apart in site and surroundings, are akin in spirit.

'The Taj, in tribute to pure beauty, was designed as a temple, a shrine. Rockefeller Center, conceived in the same spirit of æsthetic devotion, is designed to satisfy, in pattern and in service, the many-sided spirit of our civilization. By solving its own varied problems, by bringing beauty and business into closer companionship, it promises a significant contribution to the city planning of an unfolding future.'

We gather, under the words of the press agent, that Rockefeller Center is American, distinctly and somewhat typically. The Taj Mahal was built in 1632 by Shah Jahan as a burial place for his favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal, and for his own remains. Rockefeller Center was built in 1932 by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., as office space for whosoever might want it, and as a business center for certain branches of the amusement trades.

II

In the year 1928, William A. White, real-estate agent for Columbia University, decided to try to interest the Metropolitan Opera House in occupying part of the ground between Forty-eighth and Fifty-first Streets and Fifth and Sixth Avenues. This land had been in the possession of Columbia University since 1814, when the New York legislature granted the tract to Columbia College. By 1928, leases on some of the old brownstone houses had begun to expire, and Columbia Uni-

versity was interested in renting the property.

Meanwhile, discussions had been taking place between the officers and the patrons of the Metropolitan Opera House concerning the construction of a new opera house. The Metropolitan Opera Company had been offered $11,000,000 for the old Opera House, standing on Broadway and Seventh Avenue, between Thirty-ninth and Fortieth Streets. Otto H. Kahn, who was then president of the Metropolitan Opera Company, had persuaded John D. Rockefeller, Jr., that it would be a fine thing to have the new opera house erected on the Columbia University property. Mr. Rockefeller's experts studied the problem and reported back that in their opinion the project would be a good thing for the opera, a good thing for Columbia University, and perhaps a good thing for Mr. Rockefeller.

It was a time when any enterprise which appeared to be financially possible was thought of as certain to become financially sound with the mere passage of years, by virtue of natural laws, American good luck, and the 'rugged individualism' for which we felt ourselves to be famous. Radio City, conceived in lush days, became the posthumous child of Coolidge Prosperity, brought to birth after the crash. Although no actual construction work was begun until long after a financial crash had become the Depression, none of the proud parents-to-be appeared to entertain any fears for the future of the child which was about to be born at such an inauspicious period. There is a pride of ownership, a pride in carrying through a project, which, when people still have the means, is stronger than immediate circumstances. Flurries in stocks and bonds, portents of bankruptcy, could not hinder those who, trusting their own larger vision, could afford the luxury of defying the times.

Mr. Rockefeller formed a company, the Metropolitan Square Corporation, which proceeded to buy up the leases outstanding on Columbia University's land. Meanwhile the families which dominated the Metropolitan Opera socially, and the members of the holding company which looked after the financial management of the Opera's property, were trying to make up their minds what to do. Some of the Opera's patrons did not want to move. They had been going to the old red-plush and gilt Opera House for a great many years; there was a homelike quality about the drab yellow building which they did not wish to lose; and modern art did not interest them. The directors, for their part, were doubtful of the financial value of the new project to the Opera company.

This controversy was still going on when Mr. Owen D. Young, chairman of the board of the General Electric Company, who had fostered radio development for many years, hit upon a plan by which he hoped to centralize the radio industry. The Radio Corporation of America, through its two subsidiaries, the National Broadcasting Company and the Radio Keith Orpheum Corporation, controlled a large part of the radio business of the United States, as well as a smaller part of the motion-picture and theatre business. It was Mr. Young's plan to bring these enterprises together into one central 'city' within New York City.

Mr. Rockefeller, meanwhile, held leases to some of Columbia University's land, and the Opera finally refused to move. Something had to be done with the leases, and Mr. Young interested Mr. Rockefeller in financing his plan for a radio city. Mr. Rockefeller set aside $120,000,000 for this purpose.

insuring the money against depreciation. Columbia University received rental for its land of $3,600,000 a year, which is said to be 60 per cent of the university's entire income. The leases to the land are for twenty-one years, with options for three renewals of twenty-one years each, making the leases valid for eighty-four years, after which time the property, with all the buildings erected thereon, reverts to Columbia University without cost.

III

Architects, who had thus far been considering an opera-house project, now broadened their plans to the larger Radio City scale. The new plans included two monster theatres, a 70-story R. C. A. Building, a 31-story R K O Building, two 45-story office buildings, two 6-story buildings, one to become the British Empire Building, the other La Maison Française, and two 9-story buildings, one to become the Italian Building and the other the German Building.

The entire project extends throughout most of the three city blocks from Forty-eighth Street to Fifty-first Street, between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, and includes twelve buildings. Between Fifth Avenue and Sixth Avenue a new street has been cut, which runs the width of the project. In front of the center of this private street will be a plaza, with a large sculptured fountain and mosaic pavements. The roofs of all the buildings will have landscape gardens, emulating the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, and there will be bridges between those buildings which are on a level with each other. All of the buildings and theatres are connected with underground passageways, and arrangements have been made for freight-delivery passageways.

While the construction work was going on, group leases were signed with the Radio Corporation of America, the National Broadcasting Company, and the Radio Keith Orpheum Corporation. The Radio Corporation took the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth floors of the 70-story R. C. A. Building, as well as parts of the fifty-third and fifty-fourth floors. It also leased from the nineteenth to the twenty-fifth floors inclusive in the R K O Building. The National Broadcasting Company leased offices between the third and the sixth floors in the R. C. A. Building and twenty-six broadcasting studios. The Radio Keith Orpheum Corporation leased the Radio City Music Hall, the larger theatre, and the R K O Roxy Theatre, the smaller motion-picture theatre.

A British syndicate had leased the British Empire Building and a French syndicate La Maison Française. It is planned to display in these buildings the products of the countries whose names they bear, and on July 19, 1932, President Hoover signed a bill which makes of these buildings a free port for the display of goods; if the goods are sold, they will then pay the regular customs duties.

The 70-story R. C. A. Building has a large concourse and a large concert stage with dining terraces and restaurant facilities for 18,000 persons. A huge pipe organ will entertain the diners. The elevators in the buildings are of the silent, swift, heavy, solemn type. For safety, the doors are controlled by a new device called the 'Electric Eye.' The moment any passenger's shadow crosses the Electric Eye, the doors will refuse to shut, so that accidents may be guarded against. Once the doors are shut, the operators push buttons and stand in idle attention, while the passengers feel as if they were about to be born until they arrive noiselessly at their destinations.

The elevators, so reads the official booklet, have a maximum speed of 1200 feet a minute, but, since the largest building is only 805 feet high, they will be able to go from the first to the sixty-fifth floor in about fifty seconds. 'Operating on a full schedule from eight o'clock in the morning to six-thirty o'clock in the evening,' says the official booklet, 'the seventy-four elevators in this building will travel over 2100 miles per day, or about 760,000 miles per year — more than thirty times the distance around the world.' Only, of course, they will stay in the building.

IV

The Rockefeller Center project is one of the first coöperative architectural ventures since the Renaissance. Three large architectural firms are responsible for the buildings — Reinhard and Hofmeister; Corbett, Harrison, and MacMurray; Hood and Fouilhoux. Some architects maintain that Rockefeller Center is a test case which will show whether large-scale architectural production for business purposes can displace individual units. If it is a commercial success, it is likely to have a profound effect on housing projects and industrial enterprises. Nothing of this scale in a building project has been attempted in this country before. There is in New York the Garment Center Capitol, a group of buildings centralizing the garment trades, and there are other smaller enterprises, but it required a combination of amusement ventures, with their large and far-reaching public, to make possible this huge experiment in centralization.

Rockefeller Center is another instance of the tendency in America during the twentieth century toward large-scale, centralized production and consumption. Although it begins with large leases from the amusement companies, there is enormous space to be rented to individuals and corporations, and its financial progress will indicate whether it has exceeded or kept within the margin of utility. Its success may lead to other attempts at centralization, some legitimate, and some at the expense of individuality. Meanwhile, the radio industry, with its vast scope, and the amusement trades, with their large patronage, may make financial success possible for Rockefeller Center.

The buildings themselves are typical of the purposes for which they are designed. They are simple, unobtrusive, and rather colorless. There is no unit in the group so surpassingly beautiful as the New York Telephone Building on West Street, and there is none so bizarre as that clown's cap, the Chrysler Building. The Rockefeller Center buildings have not the strength and purity of the New York Daily News Building, nor are any of them spoiled by such unsightliness as the superfluous mooring-mast tower of the Empire State Building.

With the exception of the large sculptured panels by Gaston Lachaise above the portals of the R. C. A. Building, the art work in and on the Rockefeller Center buildings is a detraction from their beauty rather than an addition to it. The plaques on the wall of the Radio City Music Hall look as if some giant had spat on a pure space. Most of the murals within the theatre buildings are thin and insipid, and the large flat mural in the Radio City Music Hall's grand lobby detracts from the strength of the colossal height. Much of the art work is relegated to the lounges and retiring rooms of the theatres, where the walls are adorned by well-known modern artists. Some of these murals have becoming simplicity, but most of them

are both pretentious and commonplace.

The theatres themselves are built with all the modern conveniences and more mechanical stage and auditorium devices than have ever been used before. The smaller auditorium, the R K O Roxy Theatre, possesses a fine pure sweep, and the walls are beautifully paneled in warm wood. The larger theatre is necessarily more broken and less attractive, though grander. Its ceiling, which can be flooded with every shade of color desired by the color conductor, — for there is a conductor of color as well as of music, — has somewhat the effect of a huge collapsible drinking cup. The acoustics are good and highly amplified, without reverberation, the sound being drawn into little holes in the walls when it might be tempted to get in the way of harmony. The acoustic experts speak of sound 'seeing' a hole and crawling into it to be sucked up in the general coöperative effort. That was my impression of what had happened to the artist when I witnessed the first programme presented in the Music Hall by 'Roxy.'

V

Samuel Lionel Rothafel came to New York as a young man after a boyhood spent in Minnesota. He found himself hungry and joined the marines, where he remained in obscurity for five years. He was also at one time a baseball player. Early in the history of the motion-picture industry there was an unpretentious theatre at 116th Street and Seventh Avenue in New York City, called the Regent Theatre. It showed motion pictures of William S. Hart and Mary Pickford, and was a typical amusement place of the middle-class neighborhood. Rothafel came into the management of the Regent Theatre, and one of his first acts was to persuade the proprietors to add such sweet melodies as Schubert's 'Unfinished Symphony' to the programme.

It was at this period that several large motion-picture producers made what they considered a great discovery: namely, that the theatre was more important than the entertainment offered therein. They built and bought theatres throughout the United States, drove small theatres out of business by competing with them, and then made them into large theatres. After these real-estate merchants of the motion-picture industry had obtained control of most of the theatres throughout the United States, as well as of many in Europe, South America, India, and the Far East, it did not much matter, according to their theory and practice, what they put into them, so long as the entertainment was on the plane of the lowest common denominator.

One of the largest of the early motion-picture theatres of that era was the Strand, at Broadway and Forty-seventh Street in New York City. The management, noting Rothafel's presentation programmes of music and dancing at the Regent Theatre, hired him to manage the programmes at the Strand. Rothafel came in, and almost at once orchestras began to come out of the floor playing Tchaikovsky's '1812 Overture,' and hordes of young girls in pretty ballet skirts began to tiptoe out of huge red silken hearts, only to tiptoe back into them again, while colored lights ran riot and monstrous organs played giddily. The materials were all very expensive and very shiny, and the number of musicians was multiplied beyond the wildest dreams of Richard Wagner.

Then radio was born, and Rothafel went on the air. He needed a shorter

and a sweeter name, and he called himself 'Roxy,' while his associates became known as 'the Gang.' It was Roxy's boast that he had received 4,000,000 letters from radio admirers, but that was some years ago; there must be 12,000,000 by now. Many of those who write to him, Roxy told an interviewer, are the mothers of children.

Meanwhile, Roxy had decided that he must have his own theatre in New York, a theatre which would be the largest in the world, which would bear his name, and which, as he fondly expressed it, would become 'the Cathedral of the Motion-Picture Art.' When the Roxy Theatre opened, it held accommodations for 6200 persons. On the opening night, traffic was jammed in the vicinity. Charlie Chaplin and Gloria Swanson were there, and so were thousands of others who had become prominent in the theatrical and motion-picture world. The ushers dripped with gold braid, and in summer wore larger velvet berets than had ever been seen in Paris. They set a style in attendants, and were promptly copied in the other cathedrals of the motion-picture art.

'You know,' Roxy told an interviewer at the time, 'this is my big thing. I'll never do another thing like it, and in our generation I think you will not see another movie theatre so big! Do you think it will go? Do you think it will succeed?'

When Roxy said that he would never do a bigger thing, he had reckoned without the millions of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and he could not have foreseen Radio City. In 1931, Roxy suddenly resigned from the management of the theatre which bore his name, and it was announced that he had been called to the chair of entertainment art at Radio City. He has since persuaded himself, at least for the purposes of print, that he himself conceived Radio City. In the statement which he issued just prior to the opening of the Music Hall under his management, he wrote: —

> Scores of people have asked me, as they watched the great entertainment center at Radio City take form, how I conceived the idea of these great theatres.
>
> I did n't conceive the idea. I dreamed it. I dreamed it. I believe in creative dreams. The picture of the Radio City theatres was complete and practically perfect in my mind before artists and architects put pen to drawing paper.
>
> I was more fortunate than I can say in enlisting the aid of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and Owen D. Young, to whom I took my dream of Radio City and who helped to make it come true.
>
> But I am deeply grateful to one man more than any other. That is my chief, Merlin H. Aylesworth. Without him we could not have done a thing. He guided me, trusted me, and supported me. At times when any other executive would have questioned me and halted me, he let me proceed unmolested. It was a beautiful expression of faith.
>
> It was my pleasure to take him into the new R K O Roxy for the first time. He was quiet and I could not get a word out of him. But when he turned to look at me, the tears were in his eyes, as he said, 'You so and so, I knew you would do it.'

VI

Roxy has been compared with Barnum; he has been called a super-Barnum by his press agents. The 'super' is slightly funny, and the Barnum is highly inaccurate. Roxy bears as much resemblance to Barnum as the inner tube of an automobile tire does to a whale; both are inflated, but it takes only a pin prick to burst the tire tube, while the whale is solid blubber. From 1841, when Barnum's American Museum opened its doors at Ann Street and Broadway, until

1891, when P. T. Barnum died, he was a national institution. Barnum did not concentrate on size alone, and we still remember the name of Barnum because of his ability to procure and to present interesting entertainments of a wide, common nature, and because of his genius for advertising them. Roxy has only a genius for advertising himself, and a talent for the presentation of the commonplace on a large scale.

The difference between the common and the commonplace is the difference between Barnum and Roxy. Barnum's creations had little to do with size and more to do with originality and quantity. Barnum, it should be remembered, was opposed to the size of the Barnum and Bailey circus, and it was his partner, James A. Bailey, who made the modern circus what it is. Bailey also had the ability to magnify and at the same time to preserve the quality of individual acts. Barnum's interest was in originality, and in the widespread publicity of the unique. When he did not have an actual wonder, he created it. An ossified specimen became the Feejee Mermaid, and Joice Heth, an elderly Negress slave, was advertised as the nurse of George Washington and going on 160 years of age. Barnum never bothered with the esoteric, but all of his attractions had to have a special individuality of their own and one capable of widespread exploitation. In Jenny Lind, Barnum had a singer whose voice was admitted to be one of surpassing beauty by almost everyone who heard her. It was possible for Barnum to exploit this voice on a grand scale, because Jenny Lind's qualities were not limited in their appeal or choice. Mendelssohn, who was said to have been in love with her, had to admit that she sang bad music best.

Roxy, in common with his patrons, the projectors and builders of Radio City, has a passion for size as such. When the Radio City Music Hall opened its doors for its first show on the night of December 27, 1932, 6000 of the most prominent persons in New York attended the performance. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., represented Rockefeller Center. Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler represented Columbia University. Owen D. Young, M. H. Aylesworth, and David Sarnoff represented the radio interests. Architects, writers, painters, actors, bankers, lawyers, and newspaper photographers crowded into the vast building. It was almost unanimously agreed afterward that the show which Roxy presented to them in the largest theatre in the world was the dullest and longest they had ever seen.

The programme consisted almost entirely of the spectacular numbers which usually precede the presentation of a movie in all large motion-picture theatres. Two or three of such numbers are the usual limit of the programme, but Roxy made the multiplication table his guide, and the performance which he presented lasted from nine o'clock in the evening until almost two o'clock in the morning, without any entertainment relief. The mediocre was prevalent, and the commonplace was rampant. Any individuality was dwarfed by the size of the theatre, and only when forty-five girls all placed their toes in one direction simultaneously was there any slight enthusiasm. Symmetry alone seemed effective in such vastness, and the appeal of symmetry by itself becomes monotonous. Humor is almost impossible in a theatre of that size. Tigers, seals, and acrobats, midgets, giants, and bearded ladies, would be incongruous in such elegance. There are no tier boxes, so Society will not listen to opera there.

Speculation was active among the first-night audience as to just when the motion pictures, like cockroaches in a house of decay, would come crawling on to the huge stage. Ten days after the opening performance, the policy of the Music Hall was changed, and motion pictures were shown there with accompanying presentation numbers, in the manner of the old Roxy Theatre. Roxy, in his statement before the opening, had written: 'Now I think the presentation has outgrown its usefulness. The motion pictures have gone away from this. They speak for themselves. They no longer need such aid. They have grown up. So I am going to do something else. No movies will be shown in the Radio City Music Hall. There we hope to develop another form of entertainment.'

VII

Just what form of entertainment is appropriate and possible for the huge Radio City Music Hall has kept the impresarios, the lessors, and the public guessing ever since its opening. As *Variety*, the theatrical weekly, remarked: 'The impression of that opening crowd has spread in such fashion that 100,000 or so folks, seemingly, have become show doctors and are talking or planning what to do with the Music Hall and conjuring up its possible future.'

The only institution connected with the enterprise which can rest easy is Columbia University. It does not receive the Rockefeller Center buildings, including the two large theatres, for eighty-four years, and by that time some great showman may appear who will utilize the advantages of the large theatres, and some magnate who will be able to use the concentration of the buildings.

In *The Revolt of the Masses*, José Ortega y Gasset has written: 'The history of the Roman Empire is also the history of the uprising of the Empire of the Masses, who absorb and annul the directing minorities and put themselves in their place. Then, also, is produced the phenomenon of agglomeration, of "the full." For that reason, as Spengler has very well observed, it was necessary, just as in our day, to construct enormous buildings. The epoch of the masses is the epoch of the colossal.'

In the execution of Rockefeller Center, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., has permitted the masses to dictate to him. Driven, perhaps, by his sense of duty to permit his great wealth to become of service to his fellow man, he has abdicated control of his property, which has been aptly characterized recently as 'God's Gold.' Mr. Rockefeller has fallen into the clutches of the masses and into the hands of the men who claim to know what the public wants and will want. The public either sullenly accepts or bitterly resents, and it asks its patrons to give it fare or perish, with the implied threat that, unless the fare proves acceptable eventually, the public will become its own master. But, being incapable of self-mastery, the masses are anxious to be led.

Rockefeller Center, which has sometimes been hailed as an attempt at city planning, is anything but that. As we have seen from its history, the project started as a comparatively small venture for the purpose of providing a new opera house for New York, and became a monster of haphazard growth, with architectural symmetry. The Taj Mahal was an attempt at realization of a man's dream of abstract beauty, with no utilitarian purpose. Rockefeller Center is the tangled growth of a group mentality, and suggests once again that nothing

enduring in this world is accomplished except by individuals who realize the direction of their desires, and who have no utilitarian aim. Rather than a form of social or economic planning, it is an example of drift. Starting as a small plan of artistic patronage, the project became a vast real-estate development with artistic implications, due to the connection with it of organizations which are purveyors of artistic forms to the multitude. On the way it accumulated mediocrity and remains only a potentiality.

It may be objected that the officials of Rockefeller Center never contemplated anything more pretentious than a large real-estate development. The high-blown publicity of the venture is something of a denial of this modesty; but, if it is true, then Rockefeller Center was quite unnecessary, for there was already a superfluity of real estate in New York, and a paucity of art.

FOXGLOVE

The Midst of Life. IV

BY MINA CURTISS

August eighteenth

At last it is raining. Months have gone by since a good steady rain has soaked into the ground. Thunderstorms have shot by, and hail has slashed lettuce and nasturtiums, but the ground has remained parched. The pole beans have climbed only half their height, the Lima pods are thin and empty, and only by a weekly mulch of grass cutting have the gladioli achieved their proper estate. But to-day, ever since tea time, the rain has fallen with steady persistence — the end of a long tension. I feel like the dry and thirsty ground myself, relaxing under the slow and gentle pressure of the rain.

This morning the farmer and I made plans for a perennial seed bed. New Delphinium, new poppies, new phlox, and new columbine for the year after. 'Why no foxglove?' he said. I wanted to tell him, but I could n't. To whom but you could I tell so personal a nightmare? I know what you would say. 'How silly to hate digitalis because the doctors had faith in it. You go on loving Delphinium, which deceived only you.'

It happened the night you died. I had been lying in the next bed. I think they must have given me some medicine to make me sleep, but around one o'clock a nurse wakened me.

'Perhaps you'd like to sit on his bed,' she said. The tone was too ominously kind.

'Is it the end?' I asked.

'I'm afraid so.'

'There's one more thing,' the doctor said. He opened a little box, took out a tiny glass tube, broke off the end, filled the hypodermic needle, and pricked it into your leg.

'What is it?' I asked.

'Digitalis. A heart stimulant.'

'Let me see.' I took the little box into my hand. On the cover was a spray of pink foxglove. 'They're all mad,' I thought. 'Delphinium failed me a week ago.' But there seemed no point in telling him.

You leaned against the pillows gasping, still under the isinglass tent, still the din of the perpetual machine.

'He does n't know me,' I said.

'He's unconscious.'

'You're sure?'

'Sure.'

'He feels no pain?'

'None.'

'You're sure?'

'Quite.'

'But he gasps so. He can't breathe at all.'

'He does n't know it.'

'You're sure he can't feel anything?'

'Sure. He feels no pain.'

'Oh my God! He feels no pain. He does n't know he's leaving me. He does n't know. . . . Lover, don't leave me. Don't leave me. I can't live without you. I can't. I don't want to. I can't live without you. Don't leave me. Don't leave me.' Your hand was quite limp. It did n't feel my touch, but I had nothing else to hold on to.

'I'm going too,' I said. 'I'm going too. I won't stay without him. You can't make me. I'm his, and I'm going too.'

I started to go. It was very wonderful to go like that with you. I grew lighter, lighter, and lighter. They would never have seen me go at all. Quite invisibly I should have gone with you. But no. Suddenly God's hands were on me. He wore spectacles and a long brocaded gown. He gripped my shoulders very tight and his voice boomed forth.

'You can't go,' he said. 'You must stay. You can't go. He'd want you to stay. It is n't right for you to go too.'

Heavy, sick, alone, I returned. God was right. I could n't go. Only it was n't God. It was just the doctor in his dressing gown, waked from his sleep to watch you die.

'How long can this go on?' I said. 'How long?'

'Not very long. It's hard to say.'

'I can't bear it very long, you know. Not very long. Will it be an hour?'

'No,' he said. 'Not an hour, I think.'

Suddenly I noticed the noise of the machine.

'What in God's name is that thing doing?' I said. 'He's going to die, is n't he? Let him die in peace, then. Take that cage off him so I can hold him in my arms.'

Was it only yesterday that you had asked me how long you'd been in the cage? And when I said, 'Three days,' you said, 'No. Three weeks — strapped to the bridge of the *Berengaria* in a storm.'

They took it off, and that was all right, but suddenly the din ceased too — the noise of the machine that had been pumping the semblance of life into your body, air into your lungs. It stopped — stopped completely. Power stopped, air stopped, life stopped, and you went on gasping for breath.

'Turn that thing on!' I screamed. 'Do you want to kill him? Do you want to let him die?'

For you and me, whose life had been as natural as the grass growing in the field, death was a machine controlled by a technician.

'How soon is he going to die?' I asked. 'How soon? I can't bear this any longer. It's too much. You say he does n't feel, he does n't know. Are you sure?'

'No pulse now.' The nurse's voice.

'Almost over,' the doctor said.

My arms were around you, but you did n't know. My lips were on your hands, but you could n't feel. Suddenly

a terror splintered me into ice. When you died, your body would turn cold — your body that I loved so much. Stiff and cold. No. No, not that, I thought. Not that. He would n't want it. He would n't want me to know him that way. Not for us. Not that.

'I'm going,' I said. 'I can't stand it any longer. You should n't have turned off that machine. That was the end. He does n't know me any longer, does he?'

'No. He does n't know.'

'Well, I'm going, then. I'm going away. . . . I can't stand any more. I'm going away.'

I got up and walked across the room, to be blocked by a pillar of white starch.

'You can't go,' the nurse said. 'All your life you will regret it if you do.'

I struck her in the face.

'Go to hell!' I heard my voice say, and the doctor's, 'Leave her alone. She knows what's right for her.'

Still you lay gasping, choking, dying. I went back and put my arms around you, and leaned over to kiss your lips, when a hand closed over my mouth.

'Don't do that,' thundered a voice.

'Why not? You said he could n't feel anyway.'

'The infection,' muttered the voice.

'You damned fool!' I said.

I kissed your lips. They were still warm. Somewhere I had read about *rigor mortis*. Any moment, I thought, that terrible thing will happen, and he won't be mine any more. That I can't bear. He would n't want me to. I stood in the doorway, unwilling to stay, unable to go. The gasping stopped. All time ceased. The silence of doom, and then — then a sound all my life I shall spend driving out of my ears. A rasping, dry, crackling sound — the death rattle in the throat. In newspaper columns there were jokes about it — about the death rattle in the throat. But it was n't a joke. It was n't something anybody made up. It was the sound you made when you left me forever. I stood there trying to understand.

'It's all over,' the doctor said. Ann came and put her arms around me.

It was then I lost my identity. I stopped being a woman. A great weight fell off me. I became just a link in the long chain of those whose lovers and husbands and sons had died before their time. The picture flashed through my mind of Electra, the Greek woman I had once seen played, standing out there before the pillars, bemoaning her loss. Of that line of women I am, I thought. Ann led me down the corridor past our parents and friends, standing stricken in their grief.

'They're alive,' I thought. 'Like mummies they stand, but they're alive. Only Jack is dead.' I wanted to poke them with my finger to be sure, but I asked instead: 'They're alive, are n't they? Only Jack's dead.'

'Yes,' said Ann. 'They're alive.'

Long afterward it seemed to me dreadful that I should have left you alone, so newly dead. You, I know, would n't have left me. But you had seen a dead person. I never had. You could n't be the first.

Alice sat with you, though — all night long. She told me so long afterward. And that was right, was n't it? You used to say, 'How sweet Alice is! She'd be so cozy to wake up next to.' But you did n't wake up. You never have. It's foolish of me to hate the foxglove.

August twentieth

Such enchanting things do occasionally happen! Last night I was sitting in the living room reading Greville's *Life of Sidney* — another beautiful man who died too soon —

when I heard a great barking of dogs, crunching of stone in the courtyard. I went to the kitchen door to investigate. A colossal horse-van stood before me, driven by a friend who lives over fifty miles away and to whom I had written a wail over losing Sandy.

'Hello,' I called. 'What show are you on your way to?'

'No show,' he said. 'Your letter about Sandy made me sad, so I've brought you a horse to ride. My own horse — he ought to be big enough to carry you for a while.'

The bars at the back of the truck were removed, the runway placed on them, and out trotted a large thoroughbred with as sweet a face as ever I saw. His name is Genji, he is nearly seventeen hands, and he made himself quite at home in Sandy's stall. I rode him for the first time this morning, and very exciting it was. High above the ground I feel diminutive, but impressed with the power of so small a creature's ability to control one so elephantine. He is primarily a hunter, sturdy and strong, and I rode twice as far and twice as hard as usual. But his mouth is n't as light as Sandy's, and he can pull me right up out of the saddle with a jerk, if he catches me unawares. Nor are his gaits so subtle and so easy. His high trot jogs you until you catch the rhythm of it, and his canter makes up in solidity for what it lacks in smoothness. But he's a love of a horse, and it would please you to meet me riding him on the road.

He is of course merely a loan until the hunting season starts, but he came at so opportune a time to bring me happiness. Very few of one's friends own horse-vans, but it is pleasant to have at least one, who, after the day's work at the office, will trouble of his own free will to deliver at a lady's doorstep his own personal hunter.

August twenty-first

To-day has been divinely hot. Not a cloud in the sky. Most of the day I lay on my back in the sun, wondering why the sky looked blue rather than some other color, and hoping that my breasts and stomach and thighs would burn the same shade as the rest of my anatomy. I find when I look in the mirror after my bath that I resemble too closely a zebra for someone comparatively ignorant of its ways. I was forced at one point to clamber into a bathing suit by the unannounced arrival of some friends. I gave them a large bunch of gladioli to take home, and I am forced to admit I hated parting with them. Vegetables are no sacrifice, but, no matter how full the garden is of flowers, I can't bear to let one of them go away from me. I love them too much — an unreasoning and harmless enough passion, growing, I suppose, from a gardenless childhood; too many years when I could only look and smell, never touch and own.

Do you remember how badly I behaved the first time I ever picked flowers in your garden? It was the fall before we were married, when no one was supposed to know. You had been bringing me great bunches of zinnias and asters and Michaelmas daisies that you picked for me yourself. But frost was due any day, and I had an overwhelming desire to pick flowers myself, as many as I wanted before frost. It would have seemed unwise at the time for a strange lady to be seen making herself at home in your garden, so you offered to bring me out at night when everyone had gone to bed, and I could pick flowers to my heart's content by the light of a lantern you would hold.

We started out in very high spirits — amused at so simple a pleasure's being given such an air of intrigue and adventure. The lantern and some scissors

were procured, and I started on the zinnia bed. Ruthlessly, without noticing the buds, with no thought to the future, I started to cut the blooms.

'You must n't do that,' you burst out. 'You must cut them carefully. There won't be any left for to-morrow or the next day. You're cutting all the buds. You should n't do that.'

'But the frost is coming. What difference does it make? I'll cut them the way I want to or I won't cut them at all. You can have your old flowers anyway!' I screamed. 'I don't want them!' And I ran away and hid before you could catch me. It seems very childish now, does n't it? But had it ended any other way we might never have got married at all.

I wandered around for a while in the dark, not knowing my way very well, crying with disappointment and fear. You wandered around with your lantern, wishing, you afterward told me, that you had cut out your tongue before you spoke, wondering how you could restore my childlike faith in the word you had broken. Some instinct must have made me know it was time, once and for all, to banish childish obedience. No longer was I going to 'look and smell.' I was going to touch as much and how I wanted. I went back to the flower bed and started cutting them all off at the very base of the stalk, to ensure the longest possible stems. In a little while you found me.

'I'm doing what you said not to,' I said.

'You're quite right, my dear. If you had n't, I was going to. See, my knife's all open. If you had n't taken them, I was going to cut them all off and bring them to you, so you'd know I meant what I said in the first place.'

'I'm glad.' I knew no words to express my gratitude.

'You see, I was only thinking of saving them for you. I just could n't believe you were really here. I'd been looking forward so long to your picking your flowers in my garden that I did n't realize quickly enough that it was actually happening.'

Between the me you had imagined and the me who exists, an unhappy child had flung her thwarted little will, that it might be, thanks to you, set permanently free.

I still pick flowers in your garden — carefully, so there will always be enough for to-morrow and the next day and next week, enough to give away to people, whom I allow to smell and look, but never to touch. I deny, though, that my miserliness is based entirely on greed. It has its æsthetic aspect.

You see, there are two ways of arranging flowers for a house. One may regard them as material with which to create a form, a design, which, reproduced on canvas through a painter's eye, would become a work of art. But I like to make the actual pictures, myself, with the flowers as material — decorations to serve as prisms for light, or to emphasize some aspect of a room — tangible reproductions of still lives I have seen and remembered, or composed myself. When I give away special flowers like the gladioli, each one of which I have chosen for color or for form, I am suddenly arrested mid-picture with the realization that Margery has unwittingly taken back to town with her that deep purple one with the crimson veining without which my *chef d'œuvre* is stillborn.

Do you think I have invented an æsthetic code just to excuse my stinginess?

August thirty-first

Not this year have I waked up, as I did this morning, to the solid thudding rhythm of rain beating on the roof.

Comatose, I dozed in the snug security of my bed. Gradually the raindrops beat a tattoo on my mind, of relevant sound and inverted meaning.

> Western wind, when wilt thou blow?
> That the small rain down may rain?
> Christ that my love were in my arms
> And I in my bed again.

Consciousness became the necessary expedient to avoid melancholy. Awake, I found myself shaken with inexpressible laughter. How often, after all, does one participate in a cosmic joke? This day, the only rainy one of the year, was also the occasion for the last time in this century of the total eclipse of the sun.

What magnificent humor, I thought! 'That for your million-dollar scientific expeditions, your newspaper shouting, your railroad excursions, your radio broadcasts!' said the Sun. 'Rain for the thirsty earth you may have, but no secret knowledge of the moon and me or our ways.'

Last night Genji's master came to dine, to see how we were getting on. After dinner, barely any light left, the first stars shining, we sat drinking our coffee on the terrace.

'An island of peace,' he said. 'This place . . . one sheds the outside world as though it no longer existed.'

'No time, no space,' I echoed.

'No,' he said. 'No time, no space. And to-morrow, when the rest of the world changes in the eclipse, this place will be the same.'

And so it was. The rain stopped, but the mist held. No ray of sunlight pierced the fog. No breath of wind stirred a leaf. Microcosm remained oblivious of macrocosmic change, astral or terrestrial. Not so me. As the hours wore on, tension grew. Surely this day so unlike others must hold for me too some special significance. Perhaps in the vision of even a partial eclipse I might perceive, written in letters of fire, the answer to my never-ceasing where and why. By mid-afternoon the house became a cage. Every footstep marked the moist floor. Beads of sweat stood on the flower vases. The safety of matches was impregnable. I lit a cigarette from a hot coal held in the tongs and set forth on Genji to climb the highest hill.

'You would feel this way on any damp day,' I thought. 'They're all like this. Easeless and disturbing, either with no sound or with noise, jarring and strident.' Of course one never knows the truth of such things. Suspicious, my very eagerness to believe in the day's conformity. In the glade at the foot of the hill, however, I became skeptical. There was no sound, no sound at all. 'And no birds sing,' I thought. No cicada droned, no cricket, no katydid. No creak of saddle leather. Genji's hoofs hit the ground noiselessly. No whirring in the telephone wires, my voice silent inside me. A flock of crows, those noisy scavengers, alighting in dead silence. 'I must get out of this,' I thought, and cantered to the top of the hill.

The murky day had barely visibly thickened, but the heavy air seemed rarefied. At half past four I reached the hilltop farm. 'One must stop,' I thought. 'It's as embarrassing as the minute's silence for the unknown soldier, only greater risk in the ignoring.'

The owner of the farmhouse, his neighbors and children, stood on the porch looking in the direction of the hidden sun. The smallest boy wandered out silent to where Genji stood. He walked around us, examining first the horse, then me. 'Are you one of the girls from the camp over to Cummington?' he asked just at 4.34, as the moon eclipsed the sun for the last time in this century.

'No time, no space,' I thought, 'but

the still glowing pleasure of being called a girl by a boy young enough to be my son.'

September eighth

'Waning summer freaks,' a headline in my favorite country newspaper, is sufficient explanation of my week's inarticulateness. Dog days we have had, and I have been absorbing sunlight, trying to forget that August is the end of summer. During the middle of the month I kept convincing myself that August was static. No change in nature seemed visible. Driving back and forth over the road, so accurately chased in my mind, I could see only greenness and the fixed shape of the leaves. It comforted me. 'Summer is n't really over,' I thought. 'This cæsura may prolong itself indefinitely.' But even as I attempted self-deception, with the corner of my eye I perceived the growing stalks of the gentian. Suddenly then, after only a day or two, came evidence of disintegration too blatant to be ignored. Birch leaves are turning yellow. Ferns are already parchment-colored, some even brown and dry. Masses of wild aster are in bloom, and the blue color of a few closed gentians has seeped through into flower.

The garden is racing to fruition — flowers and vegetables alike. The poppies are already gone to seed, cornflowers hurrying after them. The cosmos overtakes me no matter how much I pick. Sweet peas must nightly be cut, and mignonette and annual phlox have climbed to prodigious height. Snapdragons, zinnias, and pinks seem willing to linger.

The vegetables are either more eager to spend themselves or unwilling to make so late an effort to fulfill their growth. The string and pole beans have been unpleasantly demolished by the Oriental beetle, and the Limas are flat leathery purses with no coin inside. The drought has enfeebled them as well as the late plantings of peas. The romaine, perfectly headed one day; the next, chicken feed. The herbs are blooming and I can't reconcile myself to eating flowers. The *zucchini*, or what the farmer calls Italian squash, demand as careful watching as a precocious child. I always thought this too recondite and Latin a fruit to flourish in New England soil. But it is, after all, only squash, and anyone knowing New England recognizes her gift for nurturing the most distinguished crossbred exotics.

September nineteenth

At last I appreciate September. Genji has temporarily converted me. The continual chill in the air, even when the sun was shining brightest, has marred my days. I can't gracefully reconcile myself to warm clothes — my body so free and brown all summer, already turning pale, covered with breeches and boots, shirts and coats. Each night I fear a frost, try to remember just what degree of cold at ten o'clock predicts it, fail to recall, and rush about, flash light in one hand, burlap bags and newspapers in the other, to cover tomatoes and zinnias, Lima beans and marigolds, cucumbers and dahlias, only to discover on awaking next morning that there has been no frost. Until to-day I have indulged my *Herbstschmerz*, finishing my chores as rapidly as possible to sit by the fire and read the memoirs of seventeenth-century ladies whose Spartan acceptance of physical discomfort puts me to shame.

To-day I went on the longest ride, the one you and I never took. I don't know why, for it is only a little longer than the others, and much more beautiful, following as it does along the top of the ridge overlooking two valleys,

then dipping down through the deep woods.

One July morning at dawn I rode there first alone. The heat of the full sun that summer was more than either the horse or I could bear, so I used to start out around four or half past. It was the first sunrise I had seen clockwise and I smiled unregretfully for the days when to dance until light, to come home at sunrise, signified the ultimate excitement. There seemed to be no temperature at all to the air, no hot or cold, just clarity and freshness and a transparent mist rising. 'I must go to a new place,' I thought, 'for a new time of day.' So I set out on the longest ride. Sometimes I took a wrong turn, finding myself unexpectedly the herald of dawn to a sleeping farmyard. Dogs would bark, cocks crow, and I would canter back to the road childishly alarmed at the potential wrath of some unknown farmer, snatching a few extra moments of sleep.

But to-day the road was as familiar to me as the creak of the saddle. Most of the way I trotted, but in the woods Genji walked. For I wanted to feast my eyes on the color blue. I had forgotten how it enriches the September woods — the gentle periwinkle color of the fringed gentian, the bright Prussian blue of the closed one, and the evil shining blue-black of the deadly nightshade. Christmas-red jack-in-the-pulpit berries squat on their pulpy stems and the Solomon's-seal berries hang, a crimson tassel, from the end of the curving stem.

The underbrush had thinned out and dried up, so I could see stone walls, invisible in summer — the strong and lasting boundaries of lands long untenanted. The solidity of their beauty, the high hope in the hearts, the thrifty labor of the hands of the men who laid them, anchor my spirit to this countryside.

September twenty-sixth

To-day I completed a ride embarked upon more than five years ago. Do you remember one day when you were too busy to ride I announced my intention of following the road with the poplar trees wherever it might lead? In less than two hours I came galloping back to tell you that while looking through the window of an old house in my search for paneling I had discovered the body of a dead man, undoubtedly murdered.

We dashed into the car and flew as fast as the country roads permitted, only to find my corpse hoeing his turnip patch. I could n't believe that in New England anyone would sleep in the daytime.

'Hello,' you said to the man. 'My wife tells me you have some nice-looking paneling here.'

'So folks say.'

'You don't want to sell it, do you?'

'I wanna, all right, but I can't. This house is in litigation.' He spoke with all the authority of a Justice of the Supreme Court.

'Well, when your case is settled, let us know, will you?'

'Sure, I'll let ye know, but I would n't count too much on it. The court's been at it more'n five years now.'

Another five years, and the court has settled the question, but not to his or our advantage. He was carrying in wood as I rode up.

'Still got that paneling?'

'Ya-as, still here, and got to stay until my brother dies, too. Then,' and he spoke with vehemence, 'I'm gonna fix this place up good. I'm gonna tear out all that old stuff and fix the house up real good.'

'Well, you might let me know before you tear it out, will you?'

'Sure, I'll let ye know. Just what was your name?'

'I'm Mrs. Sherburn from over to Chapel Falls.'

'Oh ya-as. . . . Near Pony Mountain, ain't it?'

'That's right.'

'Wa-al, I'll try and remember. Good-bye.'

'Good-bye.'

Passing an abandoned graveyard, farms and orchards alive with men picking and sorting apples, searching for landmarks, ignoring persistently the bright flare of turning leaves, relentless signals of oncoming winter, I rode home.

September thirtieth

The first frost came last night, following on a day filled with busyness. Bushel baskets of beans to be picked, both string and Lima, cucumbers, *zucchini*, and ripe tomatoes to be gathered. The tomato plants we pulled to hang by their roots in the shed, hoping that in time the green fruit might ripen.

I cut tubfuls of zinnias and marigolds and dahlias, all the sturdiest-looking flowers most susceptible to chill. The half-ripe grapes in the arbor and on the barn trellis took hours to pick. The ones over the shed I left to ripen in their protected place. Late at night I remembered the potted marigolds on the terrace and rose out of my warm bed to cover them. But to no avail. The frost last night was thorough, no meagre thirty-two degrees.

A relief it is, too, to accept the inevitable. The last few days I have n't even enjoyed picking flowers, for I kept thinking, 'To-night may be your end. To-morrow, even if you are not stiff in death, your freshness will be lost, your perfection tarnished.' Of course a few of the frailest-looking do withstand the cold; mignonette and calendulas, *Phlox Drummondi* and pinks, hold up their heads, until, shrunken into seed pods, they scatter on the ground.

October fifth

I rode the longest ride this afternoon, ruminatively, except for the self-forgetfulness of an occasional gallop. The ridges were bristling with vermilion and jaundiced maples, softened by the deep black-green of the pine, the mossy green of the resistant oak.

'Why,' I thought, 'can't you just see with your eyes? Why is n't the picture enough? When you were young you liked October best. You could wax lyrical over the flaming Bacchanal of Fall. But now that the tyrant mind employs the eye as its tool in the perpetual search for relevance, the countryside is become the flamboyantly effective painting of an artist whose vision is antagonistic, or a vast spectacle to absorb the attention while life changes to death or anonymity.'

Perhaps autumn is a man's time of year. I sometimes think so. After the leaves are gone, when the trees stand black and strong against the thin November sky, changing, as the sun sinks, from gray to palest green or lemon yellow, then men look far out over the world and find it good, lean their axes against the wall and sit by the fireside, silent and at peace. But for women it is a fallow time, their labor all indoors, no vision, no absorption in their bodies' strength.

Do you remember the November weeks when you and Jim and Gregory used to go to the cabin? When I offered to come and cook supper for you, how politely you'd refuse with 'You see, Jim and Greg would think they'd have to shave if you came up.'

'What do you do all evening,' I'd ask, 'after you've finished chopping wood? Just talk?'

'No,' you'd say. 'We almost never talk. We just sit and drink whiskey, and Jim whittles little boats. The time passes very quickly.'

Men have the good fortune to know

such companionship in their well and happy times. Women share that silent give-and-take only in the stress of pain or sorrow, illness or death.

Is autumn a time for silence? Or is it just that

I hear a dead man's cry from Autumn long since gone
I cry to you beyond upon this bitter air . . .

October thirteenth

To-day is bitter cold. A crust of ice on the pool held the fallen leaves prisoner until the sun melted them free. My only offering to Saint Barbara is a bowl of highly polished winesaps. The copper kettle is filled with oak leaves tinged a garnet red, succeeding the bright maple, now dry and shriveled. Soon there will be only laurel and evergreen. . . . I can write no more. I go to my hothouse in the city.

Each evening when you were dying I used to look out over New York, watch the lights come on in the Paramount Tower clock, and think, 'This is a good enough place to die in.' Since then I have found it a well-ordered background for a masquerade.

My ideal self would stay here the year round and discover the excitements of winter alone in the country as I have those of summer. But a streak of the Orient in me, rendering my whole nature an Achilles' heel to cold, is stronger than my wish or my courage. So to New York I go. If it is a good place to die in, it is an equally useful one for fencing against loneliness and desperation. But with eternity it has no rapport, except occasionally by accident. From there my letters would be the kaleidoscopic hieroglyphs of a lady in disguise. And whom would she be impersonating? Ah, my dear, a strange invented woman you never knew. 'A handsome young widow!' How do you like that? Do those words shock you as much as they did me when first I heard them?

It was four years ago to-night. You were less than a year dead, but I felt even then that I must celebrate the day I met you, even as the day I was born. Many of our friends were there, and visitors and young people from round about. We had an old-fashioned country orchestra, and it was very gay. I was dancing with a man whom we had both known for many years as a rare and sensitive person, and, curiously enough, so he remains. That night as we were dancing he said to me, 'I'm falling in love with a handsome young widow,' and I thought, 'How curious! The last sort of person I should have thought he'd like.' The refrain of a vulgar German song I had heard, and not understood, in my childhood passed through my mind: —

Ich bin eine Witwe, eine kleine Witwe
. . . . . .
. . . der Erste war Anton, der Zweite war Fritz,
Aber er war nicht lange in meinen Besitz.

The picture on the cover of the sheet music was of a fast woman in a tight-fitting black hobble skirt, slit up in front. On her head she wore a black toque with an aigrette sticking straight up. So I must always unconsciously have pictured widows. Loose, desirable, and a little to be envied, I dare say.

It was only through some slight pressure of his hand, perhaps, — I can't tell what, — that suddenly it dawned on me I was the widow he meant. Your wife was 'a handsome young widow' with whom other men had the right to fall in love. My mind went blank. I know I keeled over on to the floor, and the first thing I remember was the fiddler saying, 'Well, I've seen lots of ladies fall down, but I never saw one get up quicker'n you.' I don't know whether I was more curious

about a man in whose life the falling down of ladies was so casual an occurrence or relieved that only he and my partner had seen the accident.

'There must be more brandy in the punch than I remember putting in,' I said, gallantry being the only asset my sex has filched from yours in a quarter of a century of unsuccessful imitation.

'Widow' — once the word started gnawing at my mind, I became interested in it, and finally accustomed to it. One does n't write Jinian C. Sherburn, Executrix, a hundred times, fill in numberless blanks with the word 'widow,' without accepting it as part of one's name. But that took time.

I used to think of all the widows I knew — rotund, middle-aged ladies, done up in sables and spending the season in Europe. In them I found little to enlighten me. With the famous widows in books I seemed to have even less in common — the Wife of Bath, Cressida, the patient Griselda (but did n't her husband come back?), the 'gallant ladies' whom Brantôme describes as 'the freest of women, being subject neither to parents nor to husbands, and, what is more, not to any law.' Clearly, I fitted into no such category. I was as little free as the creature of whom we used to sing in the school hymn, 'If you cannot give your thousands, you can give the widow's mite.'

One has obviously to forge one's own widowhood. Unlike motherhood, or the state of being a wife or a mistress, it is not a rôle in which one has ever pictured one's self, until unexpectedly, shockingly, one awakes one morning, desolate.

Soon after you were dead I read in the newspaper that the sound waves of voices continued around the world long after the throat that uttered them was stilled; that if a powerful enough instrument existed, the voices of the dead could be caught out of the air. I dare say grief maddens one a little, because for a long time I lived in terror of unexpectedly one day hearing your voice floating out to me on the street or in some stranger's house. After a year or two I knew that even the sound waves would have died, and I was n't sorry when someone gave me a radio set.

Almost the first tune that miraculously invaded my drawing-room was the waltz from *The Merry Widow*. I don't think I was conscious of the title, only of the familiar caressing feeling that is implicit in a Viennese waltz. The makers of radio programmes are not widely documented gentlemen, and I soon found that hardly a day was to pass without my hearing the strains of the Merry Widow Waltz. Other waltzes wearied me, but that one brought with it some happy implication, some bright picture from the past I could n't catch. Then one day I remembered.

When I was a little girl, my cousins and I used to be allowed to go to the matinée once a week, in a box with my governess. They were too old for governesses, and neither Fräulein nor I was made to feel very welcome. But the day of *The Merry Widow* was my victory. They, in their early teens, were considered susceptible to any suggestion of happy vice which might emanate from the scene at Maxim's. So before the last act they were sent home. I, however, young enough to be impervious to wickedness, — and my first victory's arising from a mere accident of birth detracted no whit from my triumph, — was allowed to stay, to hear the beautiful music and see the wonderful ladies with their great picture hats, dipping and swirling and waltzing, not just with handsome men in uniform as partners, but with heroes,

with gods who had experienced all the gayety of life and of love.

After that adventure, of course, my status with my companions was wholly changed. From the youngest I became the only one who knew the end of the story, the only one who had seen lords and ladies dancing at night in Paris. At first I withheld my knowledge, fingering it over in my mind, playing to myself, over and over, the part of the beautiful young widow. But gradually, by a series of bribes, the final one being the promise that I could always play the leading part when we acted out the opera to the music of gramophone records, I divulged my information.

For how many years Vilia or Sonia, or whatever may have been her euphonious name, remained my heroine I can't remember. But her successor, illogically enough, was Isabel Archer. From the moment, at the age of sixteen or so, that I started journeying in that romantic restrained Continent which Henry James discovered, I wanted only to be a lady, a very great lady who poured tea on the terrace and presided at dinner parties where the conversation was as witty as the guests distinguished, the food as savory as the glass and silver elegant.

That, I fancy, is the history, although unconscious, of my winter masque. Once one starts acting a part, it easily becomes a habit. My dinner parties are a close enough approximation of the ideal, the balance being a little more, perhaps, on the side of beauty than of brains. For I find as I listen to people talk that very few ever say anything not easily found either in books or in one's own imagination. The eye rather than the ear is rewarded as I look down the table. The turn of a finely built body, an individual gesture, a graceful movement, is in itself a lasting picture. With you, style was an integrated, unified projection of yourself, but most men who wear their clothes well jumble their words badly.

I can make and listen to remarks about the new play, or X's falling in or out of love with Y, while my mind wanders to the orchard where the apples in that pyramided centrepiece grew; to the woods where I picked those very laurel leaves on which the apples rest. The butter has come from the churn I used sometimes to turn in summer, and the veal is that little bull calf whose soft ears I was stroking and pulling so short a time ago.

None of my guests, I think, ever suspect that they are participating in a charade. But if one night the butler announced, 'Mr. Sherburn has returned,' you would at once penetrate the disguise, welding together again the woman of the world and the child, restoring to them that lost freedom of being your wife.

(*The End*)

SILVER MAGPIES

BY STANLEY CASSON

I

I HAD gone to Cambridge for a holiday. I always do this when I get tired of Oxford, for to see a familiar form of life in an unfamiliar setting is, I suppose, the psychological background of a 'busman's holiday.'

Drawn by the inevitable lure of the antique shop, I made my inevitable visit, and we began the inevitable talk on the state of trade, the supply of antiques, and the usual old gambits: how long it would be before all the antiques of England were in America; when Victorian silver would be worth more than a shilling an ounce, and whether old oak would ever again come into favor.

'But things have changed a great deal,' said my antique host. 'Nowadays in these university towns the professors and dons are n't what they used to be: why, before the war when a professor died I could stock my shop for months from the sale at his house. But now they've nothing to sell. It's not poverty: why, they're better off than they ever were. It's just sheer dullness. Why, the old lot were perfect magpies. They picked up everything, wherever they went, and their houses were full of knickknacks. As they traveled all over the place every long vacation, they got hold of marvelous stuff, usually without knowing it. That's where I came in, after the sale! But they have n't got any guts to-day, or else it's all this damned nonsense about modern decoration that prevents their making their houses look nice.'

(I know those awful houses in North Oxford and the purlieus of Cambridge!)

'Well, cheer up,' I said, 'I'll see you get an invitation both to my funeral and to the sale afterwards. I'm the King of the Magpies. There's nothing I have n't got in my nest. At least there's one magpie left.'

I am grateful to that amiable man. I never realized before that I was a magpie. The thought pleases me. But I am a super-magpie, for what I adore to pick up most of all is silver spoons. The very first I ever got I simply had to buy because of the circumstances of its finding. I was looking at an old Chippendale chair which had just been mended, when the dealer took from a drawer a lovely little shell-backed teaspoon. 'I found this yesterday, right underneath that wooden slat in the chair, behind the upholstery,' he said. 'I suppose it was one of the family spoons, and had slipped in during some tea party in the time of George III and never been found. Probably some unhappy maid was sacked because of it!' Unable to afford the chair, I bought the spoon. My magpie instincts could not resist it.

That was years ago, when I was a youngster, and ever since I watch for the lovely pale glitter of old silver in the windows of antique shops and jewelers. How easy it is, when you

know how, to spot the color of old silver even among the shine of the modern machine-polished stuff. One old spoon or mustard pot in a window surrounded by the horrible stuff they turn out now stands out not so much because of its shape as because of its color. Years of rough handling, polishing, and use have given to old silver a surface covered with a multitude of minute scratches that makes the light strike on it in such a way that the metal seems a different color. Actually the only difference is that it catches more light than the highly polished modern silver. The color of the metal is the same in each case, but modern surfaces shine dully like mirrors and reflect the dark things round them. Old silver reflects nothing. It refracts. And that is why we magpies like it so much. It catches our eye!

II

The collecting of old silver is not just a simple process of accumulation. One selects and rejects the whole time. And always one is hoping to find the strange historical piece. For, when you come to think of it, one can do by means of silver what can be done in no other way. The presentation of a piece of silver by one person to another or by a group of persons to one is always an event. It commemorates something. It may even be a branch of literature. How often I have wondered if among the initials engraved on old cups and bowls and teapots lie hidden literary events of the first order. For everyone, almost, at some time in his life has had a piece of silver presented to him, inscribed with some name, date, or statement.

Just fancy finding a christening mug with a date mark of the late eighteenth century and the initials 'P. B. S.' Such a piece must have existed somewhere, — perhaps it had more simply 'To Percy' on it! — but someone must have had it, and you or I may yet find it. Somewhere among the despised mass of mid-Victorian silver lie the cups and teapots which were at some time or another given to Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Charlotte Brontë, and the rest. Yet for some inexplicable reason we never seem to hear in the sale catalogues of 'literary silver.' Possibly this is because so much old silver, as soon as it gets to the dealers' hands, is repolished and cleaned up and the old engraving rubbed off so as to make it salable. Just think of the literary events we have lost like this! No one has ever written a book on 'Inscribed Silver': what a chance awaits some more successful magpie than myself! For I have only one small find to my credit that seems to hide some curious event. But whom it concerns and what it means I have not the slightest idea.

It is a simple trefoil spoon, severe in outline, delightful in its simplicity, which I found in some odd shop in a country town. It bears this inscription, cut in the attractive italics of the period, in one line down the handle of the spoon: 'Prepare to follow after R. A. 1664.' I have often wondered what this means. Did 'R. A.' leave this spoon at his death to some relative, tempering his gift with a warning, so that it at once became a *memento mori?* Or, on the other hand, did 'R. A.' give it as a christening spoon to his son, suggesting paternally that he should follow the example of his father? Was 'R. A.,' in short, a puritan or a prig or something totally different? Anyhow, there it lies on my table with its enigmatic inscription as clear as when it was engraved almost three centuries agone.

But where are all those pieces of 'literary silver'? Is there no piece to

remind us of some event in the life of Samuel Johnson? Surely someone once must have given him a punch ladle or a silver teapot or a tankard! And if I find a piece with 'S. J.' engraved on it, can I hope that it was his? Of course, if it had 'S. J. from his fellow lexicographers,' I should be certain. But for some inexplicable reason one never seems to see such pieces even in museums. You will see Johnson's china teapot at Pembroke College, Oxford, with nothing except tradition to authenticate it. You will see in the Bodleian Library Shelley's trinkets, his very rattle, a tattered book he owned and held in his hand on that last day at Spezia; but where are the tankards, the knives and forks, the salt-cellars that he must have owned and that might at least bear his crest? Do they perhaps stand on your own shelves or mine, in your very silver cabinet, all unrecognized? I must look over my silver again. And I must learn the heraldry of the great.

III

I do not think that these are absurd suggestions of mine. Almost everyone whose income is not infinitesimal has at some time or another been given some silver object inscribed or dedicated. Great events are always so commemorated, and the gold pens of Versailles or the silver Monteith bowls of Trafalgar bear witness to history. In the dinner silver of His Majesty's Guards at St. James's Palace is the hoof of Marengo, mounted as a snuff-box, which is used nightly, and on it are many lines of closely graven words recording the life and death of that famous nag. And as for Oxford and Cambridge, well, every undergraduate knows something about his college silver and how every single piece came by gift and was suitably inscribed. Possibly that was how I became a silver magpie, from long looking at lovely silver at all the meals that have ever been spread for me in my college! So why should the individual silver of private men and women so mysteriously have vanished? Why is it that those who search the world's bookshops for author's presentation copies of famous books of all ages forget to look for the delectable tankards and teapots and christening mugs of their heroes, which may, for all they know, be found in any silversmith's or at any sale, to be sold for a standard rate per ounce?

But I must confess I have never found any such treasure, though that does not mean that I never shall find it. I am still looking. And I can content myself with other things, for in silver there is so much to look for, and sometimes strange bargains to be made. What, for instance, can be more diverting than to collect those strange objects in silver made only a little while ago whose use has been forgotten or misunderstood? Take that charming little spoon, with a pointed handle and a pierced bowl, which dealers diffidently call the 'olive spoon.' You can find these spoons in any shop and buy them for a mere song. Ask your dealer why they are called olive spoons and he will explain uneasily that with the pierced bowl you lifted the olive, and the water or vinegar or oil passed through the pierced pattern of the bowl. Alternatively you spiked it with the pointed handle — though why there were two methods of catching the olive I have never understood. Ask another dealer and he will explain, also uneasily, that these spoons are for the use of the hostess at tea. With the pierced bowl she strains the errant leaf from the cup before giving it to the guest; with the spiked end she clears the obstructing leaves from the base of the spout

of her teapot as, from time to time, the flotsam accumulates and dams the Pekoan streams.

I often wonder which is right, if either. Or was there some strange rite of eating or drinking of which we are totally ignorant? For the literature of the royal Georges is silent as the grave on these weighty matters.

There are many mysteries such as this. Take, for instance, the lovely spoons of the time of Cromwell whose handles are plain and straight and end abruptly as though a length of them had been cut off with a chisel. We are told that these are really Caroline apostle spoons from which the ruthless iconoclasm of the Puritans cut off the offending images. That is as may be. Possibly someone once tried cutting off an apostle or two and found that the resultant appearance of the spoon was simple and beautiful. Then the Puritan silversmiths copied the type. Of the truth of the story there is no verification and no certain denial.

How simple in comparison is the marrow spoon, a strange object whose bowl was used for ladling up the rich gravy of a baron of beef, and whose narrow scoop for reaching the innermost marrow of those mighty joints. How fallen from glory these marrow spoons look (or their simpler relatives the marrow scoops) when we see them to-day used for extracting chutney from a long bottle. For the days of barons of beef are over; there are none to cook them or to serve them at the groaning board. To-day no board groans.

Rarest of all these oddments is, I believe, the tobacco plate. I have only seen one in a lifetime, and what a beauty it was! Would that I could find one! These were used, so legend has it, for handing round a rich handful of loose tobacco at bachelor feasts when all smoked churchwarden pipes. The only one I ever saw is in the plate of a Royal Borough, for the use of the Mayor and Corporation. Its inscription authenticates its use beyond all cavil. And it is still used. I am sure there must be many such in Virginia, or, for the matter of that, throughout the United States, the very home of tobacco. Possibly they have been thought to be ordinary plates, but they are a little thicker and a trifle smaller than ordinary silver plates. I expect many of them lurk still unidentified. Strangely enough, not one single specimen graces the silver of any Oxford or Cambridge college. A mystery without explanation. And yet, where punch bowls abound and loving cups are legion, surely the tobacco plate should be found.

Easier to find is the beer tumbler, that jolly little cup with its heavy weighted end which rollicks on the table at one's side. These are always small, for they were meant to hold ancient and reverend beer that is never drunk swiftly or largely, but sipped gently as a liqueur. Of these there is no shortage, if you can pay the price, for they are much sought for and precious. Alas, my magpie nest cannot boast a single example, and it is small consolation to remember that I once saw one in a window offered as a christening mug at a negligible sum, hurried past to return later, and then found it already gone, snapped up by some odious rival.

IV

The true magpie naturally has a peculiar taste in collecting. He does not merely search for a complete dinner set, a complete tea set, a table piece and eight saltcellars, and then rest contented and retire from the fray. He is always looking for something unusual, something that cannot easily be found. For anyone can go to a

silversmith and, without much effort, find a complete set of this or that. The magpie likes to make up his own sets, to gratify himself with the acute pleasure of finding here, there, and everywhere oddments that, when assembled, make a complete series and cease to be oddments. Only the other day I found two fine tablespoons of George II, bearing the Exeter assay mark. Later I found another — soon I shall have six! For there is a peculiar charm in English provincial silver. Away in the west of England local silversmiths could not venture to send their silver all the way to London to be hall-marked. Highway robbers were far too frequent. So the authorities opened an assay office in the smaller country towns, here and there. You can nearly always tell provincial-made silver from the London without looking at the mark. There is an indefinable elegance about all London-made work.

But what I have always wondered is, what was the silver that they used in India, in the West Indies, in all the remote colonies of the eighteenth century other than the American colonies? For of American-made silver we naturally know much. For some reason not yet explained, American silver is more elegant, more graceful, and better made than most English silver, at any rate in the early part of the eighteenth century. How I long one day to find a piece of old American silver lying unrecognized in some English shop! That would be turning the tables indeed! I have a set of spoons, with a dove embossed on the back of each bowl, and the only mark they bear is a maker's initials, stamped twice. There is some faint hope that they are American, but it is much more probable that they are English provincial work made in some town so far removed from the government assay office that the maker did not send them to be marked. Instead he stamped them with his initials, and a double stamp is, I understand, in these cases indication that the maker has used his highest quality.

But we magpies live on dreams, and only on the day that I have found a piece bearing the mark of Paul Lamerie and another made by Paul Revere shall I rest contented.

One great illusion awaits the silver searcher. How often have I read in some novel of how a marvelous piece of English silver has been bought in some old shop in a French village or a Spanish port or in some remote place like Malta or the Balearic Islands, once tenanted by British officers and men who brought their plate with them and lived in state. Alas, you can search the whole continent of Europe until you drop and never a piece will you find. I have combed the small shops of Corfu, — as likely a place as there ever was one in which to find stray British things, — and not a thing have I found. I have searched every cranny of the great bazaar at Constantinople, every antique shop in Paris, Rome, and the rest. Once only did I see a piece of English silver, and that was in the Stamboul bazaar, where I bought a snuffbox of George III, at an exorbitant price.

No, England is still the home of English silver, and there is still more to leave our shores than has yet left them. But oh, what treasures lie hidden *somewhere* abroad! Just think of all the marvelous Tudor plate that was prodigally given by Elizabeth to the various potentates into whose graces she wished to get! In 1583, she sent by her first ambassador to the Sultan of Turkey 'gilt plate' to the value of '298.2.7,' which in those days was an enormous sum. I have searched the nooks and crannies of

Constantinople in vain for one small vestige of that plate. Does it still lurk in unopened coffers of the Seraglio? If so, not one piece of it has seen the light from that day to this. And what else lies hid in Russian cellars, relics from those present-giving days? Not one single piece of English plate worth mention has yet appeared on the market coming from a Russian source.

But one of these days when I go round the world I shall stop at Mauritius, and Pondicherry, and St. Helena, and wander round the bazaars of small Indian ports where Clive and Warren Hastings may have sent their merry men, and I shall search for strange silver plate made by English silversmiths in India. For such there must have been. You have but to read the memoirs of that rascal William Hickey to see in what state those ancient Anglo-Indians lived, with their roast beef and bottles of port and velvet suits, which brought most of them to an untimely end in the Indian heat. Silver there must have been, and if there were silversmiths in America in the seventeenth century, surely there were silversmiths in India in the eighteenth.

Were I very, very rich, I should soon become a gold magpie. But even so it would be very hard work, for gold plate — and I mean plate of solid gold — is almost the rarest thing there is in plate. But what a lure there is in solid gold — the oldest lure in the world! A week or so ago I dined with friends in a certain college in Oxford. In front of me on the table was a small porringer, exquisitely chased, apparently silver gilt. I took it up to look at it and found it weighed down almost as heavy as lead in my hand. Lifting the lid to see what was inside, I caught the eye of my host, at once smiling and apprehensive. The porringer was of solid gold, a gift made some three hundred years ago by a benefactor. Nothing had tarnished that unspoilable metal, for it was full twenty-four carat. The touch of it and the lifting of it were a delight. Need I say that I was tempted bitterly to seize the cup and run from the room with it? For who is not when he touches gold? Pure gold and old gold make a combination almost irresistible. Once gold is alloyed, it seems to lose — to me at least — all its beauty.

But you will not find a piece of gold plate that a humble pocket can reach either by chance or by searching. So little of it was ever made in England, and then it was almost always some great presentation piece, some notable gift. And yet if I had the money I would to-morrow make myself just one plain tankard of unalloyed gold.

V

Inexhaustible England — there is no limit to her supply of old silver. Not all the tempting of inflated sale-room prices will lure from their hiding place the stored riches of remote men. Only a few days ago a friend who lives in a small village in Hertfordshire, an hour from London, told me that he had helped to found a local village museum, for it is an ancient village, rich in Roman and monastic remains. Everyone who had any small oddment to put in it produced his treasure. To the amazement of everyone, a farmer brought as his contribution a small silver-gilt reliquary, a perfect piece of pre-Reformation silver, priceless in worth. It had, he said, always been in his family and on his farm, and he did not know how it originally got there. On examination it turned out to be the only surviving piece of plate of the monastery which had originally stood in the village, part of whose domains was the farm in which the reliquary had

been preserved. To me at least it is gratifying to think that not all the blandishments of traveling dealers' touts could lure that ancient piece from its rightful home. And if this can happen an hour from London, what else may lie hidden in the remoter places of our land?

But where one can see whole collections of plate, given over centuries, that nothing short of a revolution can disperse, there one rejoices. Oxford and Cambridge and the City Companies of London have what are probably the most continuous collections of plate in the world. As with all such accumulations, good and bad are mixed. For each corporation is bound to accept a gift, no matter how ugly it may be. But it is an interesting commentary on taste to see how at some periods ugly gifts are never seen, for the simple reason that bad work was never done. Some of the Tudor pieces at Oxford are extravagant and fantastic, priceless in value, but not by any means as lovely as their value would suggest. For Tudor times were ostentatious and sometimes a little vulgar. But from 1630 onward every piece is a delight. True enough, there is little or nothing of the period before 1642, only a few pieces here and there that had been smuggled away and hidden, for Charles I took almost all Oxford's silver from her to pay the wages of dissolute soldiers and expensive court life. But silver of the time of Cromwell, James II, and William and Mary gets increasingly lovely and graceful, and there is not a single ugly piece from these periods.

In painful contrast are the awful Cellinesque ewers and basins of the time of the great Exhibition of 1851. Most of these are stored away and never used. Perhaps they are just worth their weight in silver. Almost the ugliest piece of silver in Oxford is a notorious cigar box given by a prominent politician, now living and active, to his college. For his own sake he shall be nameless. But the gift is a vast and massive box, intricately worked, fashioned in the likeness of the dome of the Radcliffe Camera of the Bodleian Library. Lift up the dome, and within you will find your cigar! Blasphemy on the Bodleian and an atrocity committed on the generous memory of silversmiths of all the ages — and that done within the lifetime of living men!

No one man can master all the mysteries of the silver of Oxford. I doubt if one man can understand the whole story of the silver of his own college. In my own college there are still many mysteries to clear up. Take two cases only. In 1665, the Spanish Ambassador in London came to reside in my college for six months to escape the infection of the Great Plague. While there he cemented an entente between the University of Salamanca and my college, which lasted a long time and led to many interchanges of visits. When he left, after his stay with us was done, he presented to the college a superb vessel of silver gilt engraved with his coat of arms. Then in 1675 thieves broke into the college and, as the record has it, 'took plate valued at £200 which was melted by the receiver Doggett' (may his memory be accursed). One thief only was caught and hanged, but, as far as we know, no silver was recovered then. Later we are told by the antiquary Anthony Wood that the college 'intended to make another cup in place of that presented by the Count of Molina [the Spanish Ambassador in question] which had been stolen with the rest.' Now to-day, once or twice a week, we have on our table a superb silver-gilt steeple cup which is said to be the copy made of the piece presented by Molina. But

in fact it bears the arms of another Spanish grandee altogether, and does not correspond in weight with the recorded weight of the original piece. Its date mark is 1688. So what is its origin we do not know, nor precisely how it came to us.

An even stranger mystery lies in the history of an old cup of silver, one of those pear-shaped goblets which have two ringed handles — a type, so the experts say, which was never made outside Oxford. I was looking at it one day when my eye was caught by its peculiar inscription. '*Ego, firmarius de Birchanger, in Com. Essex,*' said the inscription, '*a tenebrionibus surreptum denuo in lucem edidi.*' Then followed the name of the *ego*. I would not insult the reader by presuming that he can translate such debased Latin! The meaning roughly is: 'This cup, stolen by thieves, at length I gave back into the light of day.' The recoverer of the stolen cup was a farmer (*firmarius*, in fact) of Birchanger, which to-day is still part of the college estates in Essex. The date mark of the cup was 1705.

Now what was it all about? This cup could not be a relic of the great theft of plate of 1675, for it was not made till 1705, and yet we have no record of another theft. And what, in any case, was the cup doing away in Essex on the college estates? Conceivably this intelligent farmer had somehow got hold of some of the stolen silver of 1675, and, perhaps because it was too damaged, had it melted down again and made into this presentation cup. For silver was always being melted and remelted so that 'old-fashioned' vessels could be remade into something more fashionable. Regrettable though this is, it is true, and at Oxford and Cambridge you will see many a piece of plate which bears a dedication date some fifty years earlier than the date stamp.

I have searched and wondered and never yet solved this mystery of how the lovely two-handled cup came to fall into the hands of a farmer in Essex, who thereupon remade it or restored it to the college, of whose land he was a trusty tenant. And I have often wondered, too, where he learned to write this pompous and archaic Latin. Probably the local incumbent of his parish church lent a hand! But the mystery remains, an ancient and unsolved detective story.

What a tragedy it is that family plate can never have the continuity of plate owned by a society or corporation! When a rich man dies, his silver, as often as not, is divided up among the heirs and assigns. Can anything be more pitiful — and it happens every day — than to see a dozen lovely two-pronged forks or rat-tailed spoons divided into three parts by three avaricious heirs? Many a priceless dozen has been ruined in this way because Aunt Mary resolutely refuses to let Uncle Timothy have the whole dozen, or to take from Uncle Timothy the superb ormolu timepiece which he is prepared to sacrifice for this concession. Valuers for probate have told me how the tears came to their eyes as they saw family obstinacy deliberately reduce the value of the family inheritance by this mulish insistence on a proper division of spoil.

VI

I think that every collector of plate, however humble, should read the memoirs and biographies of the period which he fancies most. If it is Regency silver, the lovely 'Grecian urn' style of the late eighteenth century, then he will find accounts of banquets and parties and receptions wherein such plate and its uses are occasionally mentioned. Let him also examine the

'conversation pictures' of his period and learn how pieces were used and how they were placed on the table. Collectors of Persian rugs of age and beauty search the Flemish and Dutch and English pictures of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for specimens of rugs which here and there appear. For here are authentic evidence and strictly scientific means of dating. I have never yet examined the old paintings of European galleries for examples of English plate, but it seems to open a line of research which might be at least productive.

Magpies have another failing: they chatter. And of the chattering there can be about old silver there is no end. For in silver lie so many stories. Those debased people who prefer to collect old china are collecting things which have no private histories. There is no presentation china, or hardly any. China or porcelain was bought for use or as mere odd ornaments. And it cannot be inscribed with words that record or commemorate. It is miserable stuff, easily manufactured, soon broken. In one fine frenzy the housemaid can sweep away the accumulated trophies of a thousand hunts. But can she do the smallest hurt to your silver? The massy tankards of the Georges, the solid spoons and the firmly knit salvers, merely laugh at her vandal efforts. 'Rough handling never hurt good silver' is the proverb that should comfort all collectors of it. But while those who have shelf upon shelf of fragile Crown Derby, Sèvres, Dresden, and the rest, lie shivering in their beds of a morning as they hear the maids going their vandal rounds, waiting for the inevitable crash that shall herald another ruined day, we silver collectors sleep solidly and well. We think rather of the aching elbows of those who polish the silver, of the powerful rotundity of those lidded tankards and salts and salvers, which asks the menial to do his worst and defies him to the end. Here is an investment worthy of consideration. And, in the ordinary sordid way of finance, old silver is a good investment also. For when stocks and shares have soared and sunk and banks crashed and broken, still old silver holds its own, steadily and firmly appreciating in value as the years pass.

We magpies sleep easily in our nests. Our silver is of use and beauty; it does not lose its value; no one can break it or harm it much; and against those who wish to steal it we have our own devices.

FROM INSULL TO INJURY

A Study in Financial Jugglery

BY N. R. DANIELIAN

THE following analysis of the Insull collapse is written for the use and contemplation of those who are interested in the causes, methods, and results of business decadence; in those factors which have shaken the very foundations upon which the continuity of modern industry hinges — namely, accumulation of savings applied to large industry and directed by individual initiative, judgment, and, we hoped until recently, integrity. The complete breakdown of faith in this system, unfortunately justified, as expressed in lack of confidence, the fruits of which all markets, banks, and business in general are reaping at present, may spread untold ruin among the most cherished and essential institutions of security and stability — banks, insurance companies, private property, in fact the whole industrial and credit structure of production and distribution.

Unless we are ready to try new principles and ideas according to which the sins of the few will not necessitate repentance by society as a whole, remedies will have to be found; ways must be devised to check individual tendencies to digress from methods that ensure the preservation of industry and to eliminate those elements of instability which are due, not to faults of the system, but to the weaknesses in the mental fibre of individuals in positions of leadership. However, a pious desire to do something constructive is not sufficient; we must know the nature of the germs which have weakened the system. The Insull incident is a case study; perhaps it does not represent the general or average; on the other hand, the financial practices which it reveals are by no means rare occurrences.

I

'All the important properties in the Insull group of public utilities,' proclaimed Samuel Insull in a pamphlet dated October 31, 1930, '. . . have the advantage of Insull policies and management. Thus, there has grown up an institution — based upon the experience and upon the financial, engineering, organization, and executive ability of its personnel — which has made a notable success in utility management.' The pamphlet went on to explain the increasing complications of the corporate structure: 'To maintain this institution and to perpetuate it in behalf of the public served by the various operating companies of the Insull group of utilities, in behalf of the hundreds of thousands of investors in those companies, and in behalf of the men and women who make up the various organizations, there were organized two investment companies — Insull Utility Investments (Inc.), incorporated in De-

cember 1928, and Corporation Securities Co. of Chicago, incorporated in October 1929.'

The results of this solicitude for the public weal are expressed in the auditors' or receivers' reports as of the day receivers were appointed in April 1932: —

1. Insull Utility Investments (Inc.): Total liabilities, $253,984,341.61; total assets, $27,473,364.80, most of which is pledged or loaned, leaving unpledged securities with a market value (April 16, 1932) of $1,646,580.84, which have now proved absolutely worthless, as against funded debt of $58,645,028.77 and capital stock of $148,036,572.93. In other words, there is nothing for total investors' book equity of $206,681,601.70.

2. Corporation Securities Co. of Chicago: Total liabilities, $142,374,979.58; total assets, $13,146,482.66; assets pledged to secure notes payable, $12,041,017.51; leaving $112,768.12 for liabilities of all kinds, excepting secured notes, of $126,966,716.35. The receivers could not even afford to hire the services of accountants to audit the books.

3. Middle West Utilities Company: No assets to cover preferred and common stocks carried at a book value of $220,924,641; furthermore, the equity available behind the outstanding gold notes to the amount of $40,000,000 has declined in value to a point where it is doubtful whether they will realize much in liquidation.

The above indicated deficits are not the measure of investors' losses in these three companies. The actual loss cannot be calculated accurately for two reasons: in the deficits given there is duplication on account of inter-company holdings of stock; and again, the stated value of capital on the books of the companies does not correspond to the price paid by a great many investors who bought the securities on the exchanges at inflated quotations, the inflation being effected, as will be shown later, by the accounting methods of the companies.

The total loss involved in the Insull debacle goes beyond the annihilation of the assets of the three largest and topmost holding companies. Though the most important of Insull's corporate progeny, they are not the only ones to come under the care of receivers. There are a dozen or more others just as emaciated which have staggered their way into the hands of courts of equity, and many of them probably will not survive the operations administered by courts, counsel, and committees. In view of the total amount of Insull holding-company securities outstanding in the hands of the public, the realized loss resulting from the collapse will be in the vicinity of $700,000,000.

We need not consider separately every one of the companies now in receivership, because they are, almost without exception, wholly owned subsidiaries of the three parent companies mentioned above, and their degeneracy is reflected in their parents. The same disease afflicts the whole clan of Insull holding companies, and a diagnosis of the illness of the parents will explain the decadence of the family.

At the time they went into receivership, the major Insull holding companies were completely empty — mere corporate skeletons. This condition cannot be explained by a casual reference to the general decline in security values. Though this decline in the last three years has been great, values have by no means reached the zero level. The earnings of operating companies have fallen 10 to 20 per cent from their high points of three years ago, but they still show substantial net incomes, they still pay dividends, and their stocks, correspondingly, possess real value. In

view of this, how does it happen that the Insull holding companies, which were supposed to have their foundation on the sound basis of utility properties, show an absolute wastage of assets? The discrepancy shown by the complete annihilation of holding-company equity in face of the comparative soundness of operating utilities must be explained by conditions other than the decline in market values.

II

The portfolio of the three largest Insull holding companies consisted of three types of investments: securities of operating companies, securities of sub-holding companies, and each other's stocks. The first still have value, but are pledged to banks, or lent to affiliates, which have in turn pledged them to cover short-term debts. Therefore they are not available as a part of investors' equity. The sub-holding-company securities and the investments in each other's stocks, the greater part of which is also pledged, are absolutely worthless.

This condition is strikingly illustrated by the difference between book values and market values of operating-company and holding-company securities in the portfolio of Insull Utility Investments (Inc.). On April 16, 1932, of the total book value of investments stated at $237,892,050.00, operating-company securities accounted for $119,003,904.92 and holding-company securities stood at $118,888,145.08. And yet the market value of the former was $25,613,731.00 and that of the latter only $4,788,536.47. Therefore, at that time, the market value of operating-utility securities had declined to a little less than one fourth of their book value, while the holding-company investments had declined to approximately one twenty-fourth of their book value. Since April 1932, conditions have so changed that the operating-company securities are worth more and the holding-company securities are worth nothing.

Why this striking contrast? After all, were not the sub-holding-company securities ultimately based also on operating properties which still possess value? The solution of this anomaly will be found in the multifarious financial practices in which Samuel Insull indulged for many years prior to the panic of 1929. The germs of decay had been implanted during the period of prosperity; but they remained undetected as long as the Bacchanalia lasted.

The dissipation during the years of speculative revelry will be described subsequently. Here we must indicate the disposition made of the assets which still possessed value in spite of the market decline since 1929. These were pledged with banks and others against substantial loans. During two years of depression, 1930 and 1931, Insull Utility Investments (Inc.) alone obtained net capital funds from loans (still outstanding in April 1932) of $41,585,020.53. Corporation Securities Co. of Chicago and Middle West Utilities Company also had loans outstanding of $15,408,263.23 and $33,304,906.82 respectively, making a total of more than $90,000,000 for the three companies. Since 1929 the whole Insull holding-company system is estimated to have obtained nearly $130,000,000 in loans by pawning away most of the investors' possessions. Of all this money, only an infinitesimal amount is left.

This enormous sum, in addition to considerable amounts of capital receipts from stock subscriptions, was dissipated in two years of depression. It would tax the ingenuity of a master magician to spring a disappearing act of such dimensions. But Insull man-

aged it. In fact, the only reason why the amount was not much more is that he could not obtain any more loans.

III

The Insulls have shown a discreet disinclination to explain this situation. The auditors and the receivers of the companies in bankruptcy have presented a mass of facts without attempting to analyze and interpret them. From close scrutiny one can detect in them clear evidence of certain recurrent practices which explain the dissipation of these huge sums.

In the first place, large amounts of cash dividends were paid out, even though the companies possessed no net cash income after interest charges and expenses had been defrayed. In fact, since the cash dividends received on securities owned were mostly from subholding companies which had not actually earned them in operation, but had declared them out of capital after making proper accounting entries, Insull Utility Investments (Inc.) and Corporation Securities Co. hardly covered their operating expenses during their existence. Yet they paid over $16,000,000 in interest and over $12,000,000 in cash dividends, most of which came out of capital receipts. This condition was hidden from the public by the introduction of non-cash and unrealizable items into the income account.

Commissions to outsiders and advances to officers of the different companies, made either directly or through subsidiaries, to carry on speculation in stocks, also consumed a part of the proceeds from loans. The good faith of some of these transactions has been questioned by a Cook County grand jury. Payment of contractual obligations arising out of property acquisitions, usually at exorbitant prices, as will be shown later, accounts for an additional part of the cash outlays during 1930 and 1931.

Quantitatively the most important, and the least comprehensible, method of wastage consisted of pegging transactions by the companies of their own or each other's securities on the stock exchanges. In 1930 alone, Insull, Son & Co. (Inc.), a wholly owned subsidiary of Insull Utility Investments (Inc.), bought 1,193,590 shares of the latter's stock — nearly one third of the total outstanding — at a cost of $66,421,769.88, most of these funds being obtained through advances from the parent and affiliated companies. Approximately $50,000,000 was realized by reselling some of the stocks to the public at prices lower than cost. The rest was transferred to Insull Utility Investments or Corporation Securities Co. of Chicago at cost or higher than cost. Insull, Son & Co. thus registered a 'profit,' though at the time of transfer the stocks were worth little more than half the price paid.

These onerous transactions are inexplicable. The details of the situation add to their mystification. The average consideration received for all issues of Insull Utility Investments common stock, excepting stock dividends but including those issued in exchange for sundry investments, was about $28.85. And yet the company bought large blocks of its own stock for the treasury at prices varying between $55 and $65 a share. The funds used were the proceeds of the bank loans obtained by the pledge of all the valuable assets. Thus the company had been emptied of all good assets in order to buy its own stocks which were worthless at prices which were twice what they realized at the time of original issue.

One wonders what the motive of the management could have been. It must be remembered that Samuel Insull and

associates received large blocks of this stock from the company at prices ranging from $5.00 to $15. Thanks to their accounting methods, they saw it go up to $160 — the figure quoted in *Fitch's Manual* of 1931. Then it slipped back. Insull pledged most of the assets of the company for loans with which to peg the exchanges. As already stated, Insull Utility Investments (Inc.) bought through subsidiaries approximately one third of its total outstanding common stock in 1930 alone. Though a part of this was resold at a loss, Insull, Son & Co. kept on buying the stock of its parent company all through 1931. During the same period other constituent holding companies in the Insull group indulged in similar pegging operations. It would be interesting to know whether the holdings of the Insull family diminished during the period from 1929 to 1932 at the expense of the public and the companies.

Thus the funds received from loans were wasted away in quixotic activities.

'The failure of Corporation Securities Co. of Chicago,' write the receivers, 'is easily understood when consideration is given to the last audit of the Corporation, prepared as of December 31, 1931, which discloses holdings in the Corporation's portfolio of Insull Utility Investments, Inc. stocks which are given a book value as of that date of $58,756,208.42, and stock of the Middle West Utilities Company which has a book value as of that date of $42,829,772.73, the total of these two items being $101,585,981.15. Practically all of these securities were owned by the Corporation on April 16, 1932, and on that date had only a nominal value.'

IV

The Insull holding-company structure was a skyscraper of many stories. The income-producing properties rested in the cellar, and the floors above were occupied by various gradations of holding companies up to the top, where Insull Utility Investments and Corporation Securities Co. held sway. It has now been revealed that not only was the top floor vacant, but all the others, occupied by similar fictitious legal personalities, as well. When creditors forced their way into Insull's labyrinthine corporate structure, they found literally nothing more than empty desks and stacks of account books. Whatever there had been was pawned away; everything else was worthless paper, the product of a printing press owned and operated by the vanished truant.

The success with which this condition was hidden from the outside world was a tribute to financial impressionism. The faithful public was deceived by glittering signs periodically flashed in the form of annual reports and gratuitous statistics. Like a Moslem minaret during Bairam, the turret was lighted up with colorful lanterns, and occasionally a fanatical high priest of finance proclaimed from the top the glory of Allah and the virtues of the prophet Insull. Having risen from a clerkship into his grand-opera manner, Samuel was the symbol of an era.

It appears now that the superficial glitter of his faith did not touch the essence. His temple, in its various incorporated forms, was in fact a veritable mystery chamber, a maze where the treasures of lifelong thrift offered by his faithful followers swiftly disappeared.

The management of the vast Insull holding-company structure has been characterized, since the organization of the Middle West Utilities Company in 1912, by an utter disregard for the interest of investors. Even as it wasted the enormous funds borrowed from the banks in 1930 and 1931, so it squan-

dered the savings of hundreds of thousands of investors for many years before that. By shuffling of investments and juggling of accounts, it managed to show profits and growing assets though no funds entered the establishment, and any actual accretion of capital value had been discounted several times over by payments of excessive prices for acquisitions and by the resultant overcapitalization.

The wisdom of an investment depends upon the nature of the business which is purchased, the management under which it is to run, and the price at which the acquisition is made. On the score of operating management, as distinguished from financial management, there is no indictment to be presented. Most of the operating properties which the Insull holding companies acquired were well managed before their entrance into the Insull domain, and still better run when they became a part of it. However, this could not be said of some of the holding-company groups which were absorbed into the system during the boom period. The National Electric Power Company, the control of which was acquired in 1925, and the National Public Service Corporation, acquired in 1927, indulged, even before their introduction into the Middle West System, in many practices similar to those described above. 'Birds of a feather flock together.'

V

In the choice of investments, and in the prices paid for them, Insull was indiscriminate, even extravagant. In the summer of 1931 when I was making a field survey of the power industry, I had a conversation with the president of an electric light company who had sold out to Insull in 1925. He was an engineer who had nursed his company from a small water-power plant to one doing over 80 per cent of the power business in his state, and who up to that time had prided himself upon the fact that since his early youth he had always been his own master. I asked this portly man in shirt sleeves and suspenders why he sold out to Insull. He retorted: 'What in hell would you do if someone came along and offered you three times as much as your company was ever worth?'

As late as June 1930, Samuel Insull bought from Cyrus Eaton, of Continental Shares, Inc., common stock of operating companies around Chicago for $350 a share, considerably above the market price at the time, for a total consideration of $56,000,000. He turned one half over to Insull Utility Investments (Inc.) and the other half to Corporation Securities Co. of Chicago. On the basis of $8.00 of dividends per share, these stocks yielded a shade over 2 per cent on the investment.

Insull was still less careful in other transactions. His investment in National Electric Power Company, for instance, yielded him little real income. In 1928, Middle West Utilities Company had an equity of $21,234,263 in the class B stock of National Electric Power. The latter indicated earnings of $3,266,758 on the investment, which gives an income of 15 per cent. But $3,587,431.33 of the total income in that year, or more than the equity of class B stock, was fictitious. Instead of an apparent 15 per cent return on an investment of $21,000,000, there was an actual deficit after the payment of class A dividends.

The grandiose munificence with which Samuel Insull bestowed pecuniary benefits upon owners of public utilities which he wished to acquire is matched only by the paternal solicitude he showed for the furtherance of speculative undertakings with enormous sub-

sidies. Some of the funds obtained from the investors by pointing out to them the well-advertised qualities of public-utility properties, — their importance in the national economy, their illimitable expansibility in the future, and the proved stability of their income, — the capital attracted under such disguise was partly used in subsidizing, either directly by the Middle West Utilities Company or indirectly through subsidiaries, all kinds of competitive and speculative undertakings: bankrupt textile mills, paper manufacturing plants, real-estate promotional schemes, and so forth. In the portfolio of Mississippi Valley Utilities Investment Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of Middle West Utilities, we find holdings of stock in American Cirrus Engines, Inc., Business Research Corporation, Continental Shares, Inc. (an investment trust), Intercolonial Exploration, Inc., Niles Hotel Co., and other gimcracks of the sort.

The Quivira Development Company, owned by Mississippi Valley Utilities, and in receivership since April 18, 1932, was engaged, according to the report of the latter's receivers, 'in the development of an exclusive residential townsite about twelve miles from Kansas City. The venture, in addition to the townsite, included the formation of an artificial lake, the building of a golf course and clubhouse, and other facilities for amusement.' Similarly, the Port Isabel Corporation (Delaware), also owned by Mississippi Valley, through certain subsidiaries had undertaken 'the development of a port and townsite at Port Isabel, Texas, the development of citrous fruit lands in the Rio Grande Valley, not far from Port Isabel, the operation of a railroad approximately twenty-three miles long, the operation of irrigation facilities,' and so forth. A Texan characterized Port Isabel as a 'hot hole, a mangy harbor,' which they tried to make 'the Venus of the South.' Little did the investors suspect that they were contributing, through Insull's munificence, to the beautification of the countryside!

VI

As if it were not sufficient to have bought mere gold bricks on behalf of investors, Insull proceeded to shine them up before presenting them to security holders in the top holding companies. Having paid high prices, having invested in questionable enterprises, the master manager proceeded to give decorative touches to total assets — the 'investment' account was inflated in order to present soothing figures to the gaze of any curious investors who might peruse the annual reports. This was done by several artful methods. Often investments were simply revaluated at a higher figure, or, what amounts to the same thing, they were shuffled back and forth between sub-holding companies at continually rising values, resulting in an increasing asset value of the top holding company's investments. Sometimes the operating-company properties were evaluated at a price higher than that which state regulatory commissions would allow, and the difference was nevertheless taken up by the holding company as an enhancement in the value of its investment. As if high heels make a real addition to stature!

Most curious of all, Middle West Utilities Company, National Electric Power Company, and National Public Service Corporation, mentioned in the order of lineal descent, had the happy thought of considering expenses as assets. Expenses of organization, reorganization, and financing, after staggering in different asset accounts, finally found a comfortable resting

place in the investment account, thus apparently enhancing what they actually depleted. By the same reasoning one would be entitled to consider the expense of moving from one house to another as an addition to the value of the furniture. There would be obvious difficulties, however, in convincing the creditors or the auctioneer of the validity of such imaginative accounting. As long as no questions were asked, this device enabled the Insull companies to protect their income or surplus against necessary amortization charges, and at the same time to inflate the assets. The art of accounting is indeed a rare profession in that it allows two such beautiful effects with one stroke of the brush.

In October 1929, Corporation Securities Co. of Chicago purchased from Halsey, Stuart & Co. preferred stocks of Middle West at prices fourteen to twenty dollars higher than the market quotations on the same day. It then had them redeemed by the Middle West at the purchase price. The latter charged the excessive premiums paid to cost of common stock. In other words, an obvious, one might say an unjustified, profit to Halsey, Stuart & Co., an outside interest, was used to inflate the value of investments, instead of charging off against surplus.

The resultant overvaluation of assets and the overcapitalization of the Middle West System were such that there is legitimate doubt whether the common stocks of the top companies had any real assets behind them even at the peak of the market boom in 1929. In each successive holding-company stage from the operating companies to the top (and there were as many as eight such stages in the pyramid) the common-stock equity had been attenuated.

The Middle West Utilities Company itself was overcapitalized right from the beginning. In 1912, Insull obtained $5,000,000 par value preferred stock and $7,000,000 par value common stock from the company in exchange for assets that were worth hardly the face value of the preferred. The common stock represented nothing but 'water.' Thus the system had an unorthodox baptism. This policy of literally 'floating' a holding company was pursued all through the history of the Middle West System. The parent company would acquire some properties, or options, and then sell them to a subsidiary holding company at a price in excess of its commitment. The latter would issue preferred and common stocks in return. The proceeds of the preferred stocks, sold to the public, would be sufficient to pay for the properties. The common stock, representing, again, nothing but water, would be retained by the parent company as investment at some book value. Occasionally it would exchange, at a still higher figure, some of these investment stocks with another subholding company, standing higher than the first, at an increased valuation, obtaining in exchange either the subholding company's common stock or some of its investments at correspondingly enhanced valuation.

For example, in 1925, Middle West Utilities Company organized the New England Public Service Company, and turned over to it some properties in New England. Middle West obtained in exchange preferred and common stocks of New England Public Service whose book value was higher than the indicated book cost of the properties by $2,413,119. The preferred stock was sold to the public. Three years later the common stock of the New England Company was 'sold' to National Electric Power, a subsidiary, at a 'profit' of $5,825,518. Thus the asset value of the New England properties

was gradually being increased on the books of the holding companies.

In this way the asset value of investments increased to figures higher than could be accounted for by new accessions of real property. It made a good show with the public; Insull could begin selling some of his Middle West Utilities common stock, and make neat capital gains.

VII

It was not sufficient merely to inflate the assets of the holding-company system. Once Insull's Gargantuan progeny came into existence, it had to be fed. But where were earnings to come from? Exorbitant prices had been paid for acquisitions. Large sums had been invested in unprofitable undertakings. The capitalization of the system was overextended. Consequently there was not sufficient income to feed the lusty child. Parental pride in its growth and the anticipation of pleasure and profit which Insull expected to derive from the activities of his corporate monstrosity led him to resort to a variety of unorthodox ways of showing income in order to support it.

In buying stock of a holding company, investors sought to obtain two things — an income, and an accretion of capital value. The *appearance* of the second was generously provided by Insull through inflation of assets. But, in the last analysis, increasing capital value in the market depends upon growth of income. To increase the value of watered stock, Insull had to show earnings. Under the circumstances this required the drawing of blood out of a turnip. For a while he seemed to succeed.

In sixteen out of the twenty years of its existence from 1912 to 1932, the Middle West Utilities Company did not have enough real income to justify the payment of the dividends which it actually paid in cash. Such was the case in 1913, 1915 to 1918, and 1922 to 1932. But such realities did not daunt Insull. He proceeded to show, through his accounting methods, 'profits' when there were none, and to pay dividends, which actually came out of capital, and to build up a large 'earned' surplus, which was fictitious. In certain years these illusory items amounted to more than 50 per cent of the indicated net income.

From 1912 to September 30, 1930, the Middle West Utilities Company indicated a total net income, after all expenses, taxes, and interest payments, of $81,876,640.73. Of this, $40,909,004.77 was paid in preferred dividends, $14,296,757.75 in cash, and $9,555,770.62 in stock dividends on the common, and $17,115,107.59 rested in earned surplus on September 30, 1930. And yet over $40,000,000 of the net income was unearned, fictitious, or unrealized. In other words, the common stock of Middle West Utilities Company which went up to $570 (old stock) in 1929 had little, if any, real earnings throughout the history of the company.

The window dressing of the income account by which this condition was hidden from the outside world was achieved in several ways. In the first place, and this is the most elementary of all, insufficient provision was made for depreciation of operating-company properties wherever this could get by the state public service commissions. In this way the high cost of acquisition could be justified, and there would be more income to 'work' through the successive stages of holding companies toward the top. But this was not enough. To depend on it would be like putting an olive under the grinder and expecting it to fill a large empty barrel

with olive oil. Other and larger resources had to be tapped. The greatest source of cash for the holding-company system was in capital receipts — that is, the proceeds of sales of stocks and bonds; and, when it was difficult to sell securities to the public, bank loans were obtained by the pledge of assets. This was a veritable gold mine, if only a way could be found of paying back to the investors a part of their own funds as dividends without letting them know about it.

Devious methods of accounting provided a way of keeping investors ignorant and contented while diverting capital receipts to income and dividends. The Middle West Utilities Company entered as 'income' profits made on the sale of its own securities. This is a capital receipt and should be considered, not income, but capital surplus. Then again, the company periodically revaluated batches of stocks in its investment account at higher figures and entered as 'income' the difference between previous ledger value and the inflated figures. This was a beautiful discovery. It had the magic of producing greater assets and income by a mere touch of the pen on the books.

VIII

There was still another arbitrary way of boosting the income account which was more complicated and had in it the semblance of reality. The several holding companies within the Insull group, affiliated to each other through complete control by the Middle West Utilities Company or through partial or complete ownership by Insull Utility Investment and Corporation Securities Co. of Chicago — the several companies in this cozy group shuffled investment securities to and fro among themselves, continually increasing the values assigned to them. These transactions were considered bona fide 'sales,' regardless of the complete ownership of one corporation by the other.

The difference between the ledger value on the books of the 'selling' company and the 'sale' price paid by an affiliated or subsidiary company was entered as income and made available for dividend disbursements. Naturally no money was coming into the system through such transactions. Any payments made from such 'income' came out of capital.

In one transaction, consummated in January 1928, between the Middle West Utilities Company and its subsidiary, the National Electric Power Company (now also in receivership), the two companies together, and therefore the parent company in its own right, showed a total 'profit' of $6,030,-950.69, and an increase in consolidated assets of $8,839,753.73, without the accession of an additional cent into the system. The Middle West Utilities 'sold' to its subsidiary, the National Electric Power, certain shares of common stock of New England Public Service at an aggregate figure of $12,-438,900.00. The ledger value of these shares on the books of the Middle West was $6,613,381.91. The company, therefore, made a gross profit of $5,-825,518.09; certain items were charged against this, so that the net 'profit' recorded was $3,016,715.05.

At the same time, and by the same agreement (dated January 5, 1928), National Electric Power in turn 'sold' to Middle West a batch of securities for a total consideration of $12,218,-518.54. The ledger value of these stocks on the books of National Electrical Power was $9,204,282.90. Thus this company also made a 'profit' of $3,014,235.64. (This is the item which accounted for the apparent return of 15 per cent on Middle West's

investment on the class B common stock of National Electric Power in 1928.)

Hardly any funds passed from one company to the other, and obviously no actual income came from the outside. With one coördinated transaction, consolidated earnings were arbitrarily increased by over $6,000,000, and consolidated assets were boosted by over $8,000,000. The grave significance of this one transaction from the investors' point of view becomes apparent if it is remembered that in 1928–1929 the market was addicted to anticipating increase in earnings, and such 'income' gave justification for ever-increasing market inflation. On a conservative basis of capitalization at 6 per cent, the fictitious income resulting from the above transaction alone caused, or, if it came after the fact, 'justified,' an increase in the market value of Middle West stocks by $100,000,000. Actually the ratio of capitalization of earnings during the 'new era' was much more optimistic, and the resultant influence of such fictitious income on market values much more extravagant.

Finally, stock dividends by subsidiaries, which were often declared with little justification in actual earnings, were taken up by the higher holding companies into their income accounts at market value, and were made the basis of cash dividend payments. During the entire period of its existence, Insull Utility Investments would have shown, after payment of interest, a net deficit of $2,736,307. And yet it paid preferred dividends in cash of $7,180,105, and added insult to injury by declaring a 10 per cent stock dividend on the common. Stock dividends received from Middle West Utilities Company and others, which had not earned enough to justify their declaration, and the other methods described above were used to clothe the nakedness of Insull Utility Investments.

The effectiveness of these methods could last only so long as the entertainment provided by such acrobatics of accounting caused the investors to unloosen their purse strings and buy more securities. But when the pyrotechnics of the 'new era' were at last exhausted, and the public would not buy any more of the paper wares manufactured by Insull's Lincoln Printing Company of Chicago, there was no more cash to back the show. Failure was a natural consequence. With the use of bank loans, a last stand was made by keeping up dividend payments as well as by pegging the exchanges. This action was probably not as altruistic as people suppose, since the Insull family held a goodly portion of the outstanding stock of Insull Utility Investments (Inc.) and Corporation Securities Co. of Chicago.

IX

We hear the question asked, 'Why did Insull fail? In fact, how *could* he fail?' The explanation here given has resolved itself into showing, not so much why he failed, as how he kept himself from failing long before he did. Essentially there was no failure, because there was no success in his holding-company venture. *Insull only failed in hiding any longer the lack of success in his financiering activities.* The appearance of success could be kept up only so long as he could get funds from investors and banks to make good on the liabilities created by his tortuous accounting methods.

Samuel Insull and some of his followers still insist that they were defeated by the unconquerable forces of the depression. He was, it is maintained, a defenseless victim of the

Bears. The Christians in the Near East have a quaint explanation of why Mohammedans hate pigs. It is related that Mohammed, in order to prove his claim to prophetic rank, had the inspiration of imitating Moses in drawing water by a mere tap of his wand. Not oblivious of the realities of nature, and inwardly modest about his own powers, Mohammed thought he would make success assured by secretly burying bags of sheepskin full of water underground at the spot where he proposed to perform his miracle. It worked on several occasions to the reverential awe of the faithful. He thrust his staff into the ground, and a jet of water issued forth. On one particular occasion, before a throng of his followers, he again finished his exhortations by requesting Allah to quench the thirst of his servants with Heaven-sent water — and struck his wand on the carefully selected spot. But, alas, there was no water forthcoming. During the night a pig had nicked the bag. Then and there Mohammed cursed the pig. Insull, too, tried a similar miracle, with his inflated holding companies filled with 'water.' When it did not work, he held the Bears responsible, and cursed them.

It is a sad commentary on our corporation laws and on our accounting and auditing methods that we had to wait until a major depression descended upon us to wake us up to see the real secrets of financial miracle-making. For years the rules of conservative corporate practices were disregarded; careful accounting methods were forgotten; the canons of business ethics and moral precepts were trampled upon; and sometimes even the broad boundaries of legal tolerance were overstepped. This, however, was sheer carelessness. Insull committed his gravest mistakes within the limits allowed, or, more accurately, undefined, by law. Hidden behind a mystic maze of corporate personalities, strengthened by the accepted sanctity of contracts even though some of the parties thereto were nothing but paper dummies, he manipulated accounts to the detriment of investors.

This could be done without breaking any laws because there are none to deal with such practices; and without apparently deviating from codes of accounting, because there is no standardization of accounting practice. Public auditors have failed to recognize their responsibility to the public. The law courts have been slow to disregard the interested logic of lawyers, and to penetrate beyond the veil of legal personalities into the economic realities of the situation. Legislators seem to have lacked the necessary knowledge or courage, or both, to control the vagaries of self-interest, and to grapple with the complexities of anarchic corporate practices. Consequently, Samuel and Martin Insull have been indicted by a grand jury, not for gross misrepresentation, not for questionable dealings with their corporations in their dual capacity as officers and private individuals, and not for having misappropriated tens of millions of capital funds to pay dividends and peg the stock market, but for having been careless enough to take from the companies only a few hundred thousand dollars! And this in spite of the fact that the total loss to the investors, all of which cannot be accredited to mere mistakes, will reach the staggering sum of nearly $700,000,000.

THE CONTRIBUTORS' CLUB

To a Lady Who Complains I Ride Too Early

Lady, you tell me I am brave
To gallop to an early grave.
You say no self-respecting horse
Should tolerate this evil course
Of exercise before repast
But make this morning ride my last.

I ask you, Lady, have you seen
A field that yesterday was green
Transformed to silver overnight?
Or seen a chicken hawk in flight
Above a swamp of gold and red?
Or watched the sun crawl out of bed
And throw his blanket on the ground?
I tell you, Lady, I have found
A wandering fox up with the sun
Who stared at me but did not run,
Nor saw in me those dreaded powers
That ride the woods at normal hours.
And do you know that spiders keep
The useless tears the angels weep
For erring Man, and hang them on
Their webs to catch the light of dawn?
And do you know how strange and sweet
The rustling leaves beneath the feet
Of horses? Or the clang of shoe
On rolling rock? Or how the dew
Can wash the night from sleepy eyes?

You think some day I shall grow wise
And sleep till nine or even ten.
Who knows? Perhaps I may; till then
I'll gather dews and dawns and try
To be more quiet riding by.

Agnes K. Carruth

On Taking Golf Seriously

I no longer suffer when I play golf badly: consequently I no longer enjoy playing. This seems to me strange — like nearly everything else connected with the game. To put it differently, I no longer take golf seriously, so it is no longer a pastime.

Many years ago I was playing in a foursome which threatened to become what the judge in Mr. Barrie's play called it — a 'fearsome.' One of the players was of the elect — in fact, he had recently reached the semifinals in the National Amateur Championship. We had a gallery, including this star performer's wife. At a short water hole he topped his tee shot into the pond, and in a fit of rage brought his iron down on the porcelain tee marker, shattering that piece of club property into a dozen fragments. His wife stepped up to him. 'Remember, John,' she said quietly, 'after all, golf is a pastime.'

But the point is just here — it is n't a pastime if you don't get mad enough to smash things when your game goes wrong. Of course, you should n't smash things, because that ruins your coördination, but you must *want* to. It is a sad day when you come home happy after a bad round. You are about ready to putter in your flower beds for recreation.

I was never a good golfer, but I could pretty consistently play around in the eighties, with rare and never-to-be-forgotten dips into the seventies, and not so rare ascents into the nineties, invariably the cause of agony to myself and my family. Though not a good golfer, I yielded to few in my capacity to be made miserable by a bad score and to communicate my mood to all and sundry for the rest of the day. My wife could stand on the club-house verandah and tell from my walk and general bearing far out on the course how things were going. Sometimes she would get herself an invitation to dinner, and hurry home to leave a note beside my plate. At other times she would hang around till our foursome came up to the eighteenth green, and watch my last putt go down, with the indulgent smile mothers have for the brave performances of their offspring. Not that she cared, of

course. But a putt was one of those silly things men set their hearts on, and you must let them see that you appreciate their triumphs.

And now all that is changed, so much so that my wife does n't even bother to go near the club. The other day I played a course which I have done again and again in the low eighties, a course over which I have tramped in successful pursuit of useless silver cups, cigarette cases, military brushes, and other articles emblematic of tournament prowess. I topped three drives with my driver. Then I took a brassy and hooked three tee shots into the rough. After that I had to drive with an iron, and could n't make the carries. I looked up on seven approaches. I had eight three-putt greens. My score was 104. In fact, the exhibition was little short of ghastly. I sprained my back. My feet grew weary and ached. I experienced every physical symptom known to all golfers who have played 104 shots, all of them wrong. Yet I was perfectly calm, and even moderately cheerful.

At first I did not fully realize the profound significance of this. In fact, I had reached home, put the car in the garage, closed the door calmly and quietly, and entered the house before realization came. My wife greeted me, after a preliminary survey.

'Well, you had a good game, I see,' said she.

'No,' said I, 'I had a perfectly terrible game.' And then I paused, at the light of incredulity in her eyes, and full realization broke! I had played abominably, in a way to mortify and infuriate even a duffer — and I did n't care!

I have n't played golf since — and that was three weeks ago, and the autumn weather has been perfect.

'Are n't you going to play golf to-day?' says my wife.

'No,' I answer, 'what's the use? It's a silly game. Besides, I want to move those iris so they'll make good roots before frost.'

I was playing once in a tournament — in the first sixteen, if you please! — against a well-known player noted for his jovial disposition as well as his excellent golf. In the process of beating me he told me several stories, one concerning himself and 'The Old Man,' Walter J. Travis. 'You'll never win a major tournament,' Travis said to him, 'until you take golf seriously.' He never did either. Presently he dropped out of golf altogether.

Travis played as long as he could hold a club. Once in a friendly match, walking from green to tee through a grove, his companion said, 'Hear that wood thrush!'

'Damn your bird — I'm playing golf,' Travis is reported to have replied.

He enjoyed golf. It was his pastime.

The truth of the matter is, I suppose, that golf is a kind of art. It is more than swatting a ball. The concentration, coordination, and skill required to attain proper results are so great, and the results, when attained, so beautiful to watch, so profoundly satisfactory to you, that your attitude is that, at the very least, of a creative craftsman. I cannot imagine taking any pleasure in music, finding it a pastime, if I could neither play nor sing without some competency, and if I did not suffer an inner agony at failure. I cannot imagine finding pastime in painting pictures if I produced merely idle daubs (though just now there seem to be various professional men who perpetrate the most atrocious canvases in the name of pastime, and even ask their friends to witness). I cannot imagine finding pleasure in the practice of any art if I did not take it seriously, and take my own efforts to master it seriously. There can be no pleasure in creating art unless there is pain at failure. There is no pastime in golf unless a bad score makes you unfit for human society.

I brought my clubs home from the locker the other day and threw them in a corner. This afternoon I was trying my driver on small green apples. It felt as if I had got the swing back. As somebody always says at the end of Act II, 'I wonder —'

WALTER PRICHARD EATON

AUNT AGATHA'S MAIL

ANYONE who has watched a cat extract the full measure of amusement from a

half-dead mouse, or who has admired a small boy's ability to make a dish of ice cream last an hour, will have some notion of the Fabian strategy with which Aunt Agatha attacks the morning mail. To watch her as she engages in this, her favorite diversion, is one of the unique entertainments provided by a dour universe.

Her talents are wasted when she is given an envelope which she can identify from the outside without her glasses. The light fades from her eyes; the flush recedes from her cheeks; she cannot hide her acute disappointment. But when a letter arrives mysterious in handwriting or postmark — ah, that is something to challenge her special genius, and she rises to the occasion with the deliberate joy of an old campaigner.

For her to open it at once and solve the mystery would be unthinkable. Aunt Agatha takes the letter, holds it at arm's length, and squints at it over her thin nose. (Her own ruling forbids the use of spectacles at this stage of the proceedings.)

'Now who in the world can this be from? It looks like Irene's handwriting. . . . No, it can't be; it was mailed in Buffalo. But maybe she gave it to Fred when he was starting off on the road, and he carried it in his pocket for a week or two. . . . Hm-m, it *does n't* look like Irene's writing, either — but then, her hand is getting shaky. She's going to have palsy just like her father. You remember, Mary, that I spoke about it the last time she wrote. He was just about her age when it started. It's too bad. . . . Yes, it's Irene's writing, all right — but what is she doing in Buffalo? Maybe she's visiting Helen. Helen lives in Buffalo — or is it Syracuse?'

Throughout this soliloquy the letter is being turned over, scrutinized, examined at close range, held off to see what it looks like in perspective. Just when the observer feels that if this goes on any longer he will have to scream, Aunt Agatha surrenders. She decides that it is time to hunt for her glasses. It makes no difference where she is, the glasses are always somewhere else; they are the ultimate witness that no two bodies can ever be in the same place at the same time.

Finally she returns with the glasses astride her nose. The letter is opened, and Aunt Agatha begins to read aloud: —

'Dear Agatha, I am here in Buffalo visiting Helen. (*Did n't I tell you? I knew it was Irene's writing.*) She has not been very well this last month (*I should n't wonder, the way she runs around half-naked and smoking cigarettes all the time*), and I am helping her out with the children. (*Maybe if she'd stay home from some of her club meetings she'd be able to look after the children herself and not have to have her mother come and do it.*) They are all well. Thomas has had the mumps (*That's the second oldest boy; he must be ten or twelve now. No, I guess he's only nine. He was born the winter Gladys was married, and that's nine years ago*), but is back in school again.

'Tom lost his job (*I knew it! He was n't satisfied with the wages old Mr. Perkins was giving him, so he had to go into that new company that offered him so much more. I told Irene at the time that he'd better stay with his father-in-law. If he had listened to me, he'd have his job now*), but Mr. Perkins has taken him back. (*Well, that's pretty nice of the old gentleman. I'd have told him to go somewhere else, after leaving the way he did, but I suppose he figured that with a wife and four children . . .*)'

This goes on and on and on. At times the listeners give the letter up for lost, but it rises to the surface for a phrase or two before sinking out of sight again in the sea of Aunt Agatha's commentary. No Teuton ever buried a text in footnotes with greater gusto.

When one first hears it, this performance is very, very funny. The second or third time it is still rather amusing. But when it is repeated day after day with the regularity of the postman's visits, it becomes increasingly annoying, even distressing. Of late I have found myself setting my teeth and clutching the seat of my chair. I am a mild man, but I have a premonition that sooner or later the county paper will carry a story which will begin like this: 'Miss Agatha Watrous was strangled by her nephew this morning while reading her mail.'

WILLIAM WATROUS DEATS

Effie[1]

'Where's another font of twenty-four point chelt extended?'

To this question, and to dozens of others which arose daily in the small-town print shop where I received my college preparatory education, came the reply from any one of the force of five linotype operators, printers, and devils, 'Ask Effie.'

'Ask Effie.' I have heard that gentle command until it rings in my ears. It was a wise order, for Effie did know where to find everything from the lost benzine can to a fifty-year-old cut of the first mayor of Reed City, my home town. If you did n't know how to cut slugs, Effie was there to show you. If you wanted someone to doctor up the temperamental linotype, your shortest and best way to end your troubles was to call on Effie. If you were reading proof and wanted to divide 'Canada,' Effie would tell you every time.

I have never had a teacher or professor from whom I have gained so much genuine knowledge as from Effie. She was no Doctor of Philosophy; why, she did n't even have a high-school diploma! Yet she succeeded in pounding into my spongy brain more than any other person. Effie taught me how to read proof, how to feed a press, how to cut paper, how to handle a stick, how to operate the linotype, how to set heads, how to lay out ads, how to make up the front page, how to fold and jog paper, and above all how to feel at home in a jungle of presses, type cases, hot lead, and imposing stones amid the sweet odor of printer's ink and musty newsprint.

And it was Effie who saw to it that I was sent complimentary copies of the home-town paper (on which I had so assiduously slaved for three years) after I bade the old *Herald* force good-bye and sought further fortune on a college campus. It's been nearly two years since I left, but I have n't missed a single issue of the 'old rag,' as we called it.

Effie is now nearly sixty. Save for a few weeks' illness she has been on the job every morning at seven-thirty for forty years. How many miles of shiny silver linotype slugs and of sticky ink foundry type she must have set! How many tons of paper she has folded! How many barrels of ink she has seen whisked on to auction-sale handbills, school newspapers, supervisors' proceedings, and merchants' stationery!

While scanning old files of the *Herald-Clarion* one day I discovered my own birth notice. I showed the item to Effie. 'Why, I remember setting that,' she smiled. I was amazed. To think that this good woman, ever since (and long before) the beginning of my frail existence, during the distant days of my babyhood and throughout my grammar schooling, had been setting type day in and day out! Some indescribable religious respect for her overcame me.

Out of every five phone callers at the office, four would demand to speak to Effie. 'No, it is n't anything you can't take, young man, but I should like to give it to Effie.' Even the Boss had this happen to him. Effie knew how to place every comma to suit the taste of our 'persnickety' customers. We would let Effie talk with all the cranks who came into or telephoned the office and who 'knew what they wanted to say, but not how to say it.' Effie always 'fixed them up.' And they liked it. Who would n't?

Effie kept the books. She was the only one in the shop (Boss included) who knew how. If you wanted to find out the amount of the six-year-old account of Jeremiah Roberts, Effie would dig it from an ink-smudged, chaotic set of ancient files in less than a minute. She could tell you how much less the shop was earning than a year before, how many copies had fallen off, and how many years Frank Taylor was in arrears.

If I ever run a publishing business, Effie will be the first employee I shall ask to work. But she won't accept. She will turn down higher pay (as she has done dozens of times) to stay in the old home town, where she must care for her aged mother. She will set many more miles of type before . . .

She dies with a stick in her hand.

Randall Brown
Olivet College, Michigan
Clyde H. Wilcox, Instructor

[1] This paper won first prize in the Atlantic Monthly College Essay Contest for the academic year 1931–1932. — Editor